

Hafa Adai!

DOC to unveil new juvenile facility in May. **PAGE 2**
COTA expands Transit CNMI Blue Line 1B. **PAGE 3**

\$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXIV, Issue No. 67

www.saipantribune.com

WEDNESDAY APRIL 3, 2024

www.facebook.com/saipantribune

Villanueva pleads not guilty to contempt

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

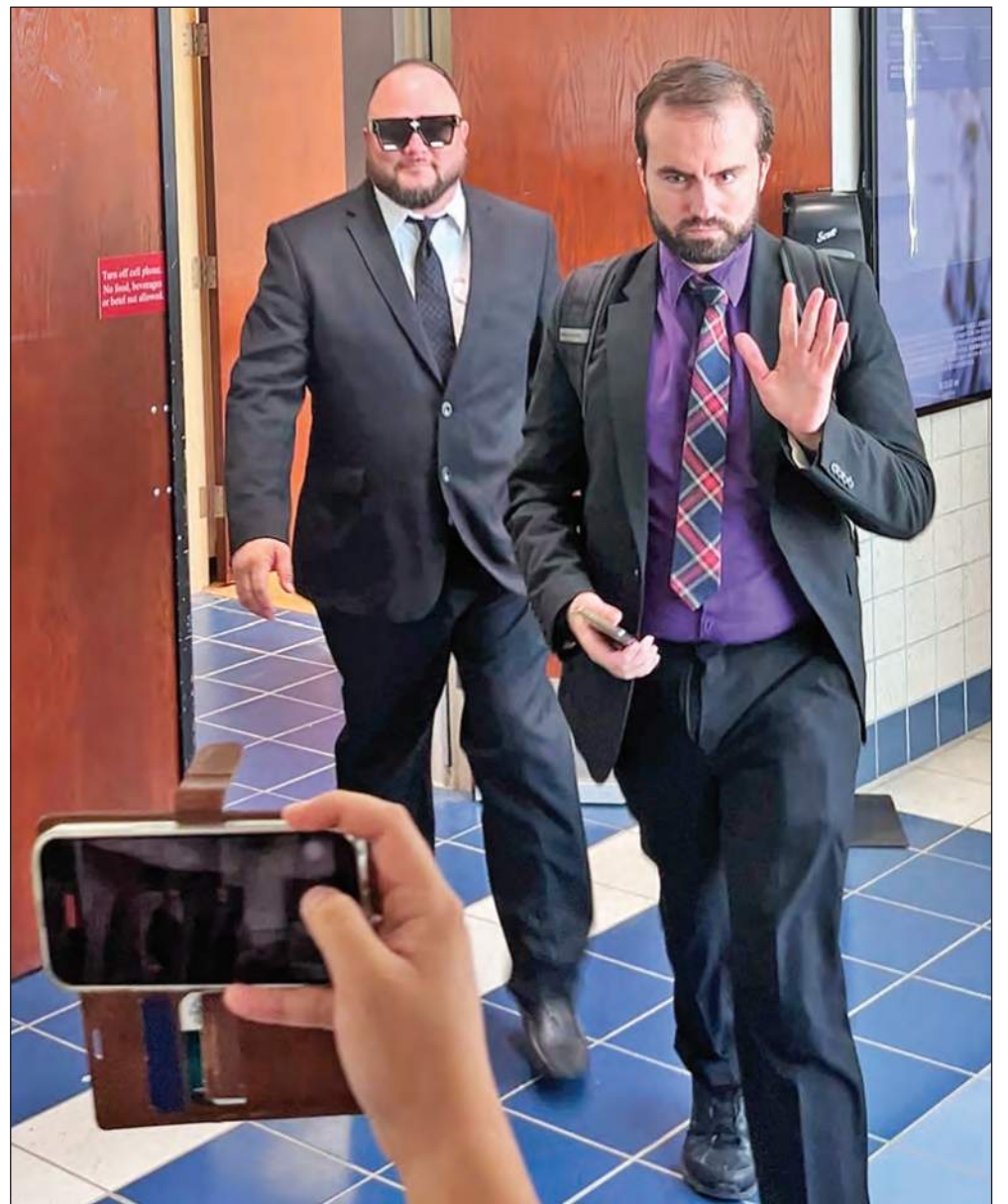
Shayne Blanco Villanueva has pleaded not guilty to the contempt charge filed against him by the Office of the Attorney General for refusing to answer questions during a legislative investigation on the previous administration's Building Optimism, Opportunity, and Stability Together grant program.

Yesterday, after nearly an hour of arguments, Villanueva pleaded not guilty before Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto Naraja to the contempt charge filed against him by the OAG pursuant to his failure to answer BOOST-related questions.

See **CONTEMPT** on Page 4



KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Assistant Attorney General
James Kingman



KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Shayne Villanueva and his lawyer, Keith Chambers, as they leave Superior Court Presiding Judge Robert Naraja's courtroom.

Over 1,000 child abuse victims in 2023



By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs' Division of Youth Services reports that after comparing the number of child abuse and neglect cases from fiscal year 2020 and 2023, the number of incidences reported have doubled with DYS currently tending to over 1,000 child abuse victims.

As DYS is gearing up to celebrate Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

See **OVER** on Page 4

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Division of Youth Services director Vivian Sablan.



Babauta: Potential unauthorized collection of OT pay calculations from retirees' benefits

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) has

expressed concern regarding the apparent potential unauthorized collection of overtime pay calculations from benefits

See **BABAUTA** on Page 4

'Truly brutal operating for whole year'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Commonwealth Casino Commission chair Edward C. DeLeon Guerrero said CCC's suffering for a whole year

operating with no staff and no budget was "truly brutal."

Speaking during the CCC board's monthly meeting last Thursday, DeLeon Guerrero said, however, it was

See **TRULY** on Page 4



DeLeon Guerrero

INSIDE



LOCAL

The University of Guam announces that Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr., will be a keynote speaker at the 2024 University of Guam Conference on Island Sustainability.

PAGE 5



BUSINESS

Mari Bar at Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan is thrilled to announce our Loco Local BBQ Street Market, happening this month on Thursdays, April 4 and April 18, from 5pm to 9:30pm.

PAGE 9



LIFE & STYLE

Japan's imperial family made an Instagram debut with a barrage of posts on Monday, hoping to shake off their reclusive image and reach out to younger people on social media.

PAGE 11



SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.



GOT A NEWS TIP?

TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440

FAX: 235-3740

EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

DOC to unveil new juvenile facility in May

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

After years of housing juvenile inmates in the same facility as adult inmates, the Department of Corrections plans to unveil its new Juvenile Facility in May.

In an interview with DOC Commissioner Anthony Torres, he shares that one of his priorities since coming into

office over a year ago was to rehouse juvenile detainees.

The CNMI's juvenile inmates have been housed at DOC along with adult inmates since the Kagman Juvenile Facility closed over eight years ago.

"When I got [to DOC], it was one of my top priorities to get our juveniles rehoused while continuing to oversee

them and continue to work with them with the help of the Division of Youth services. However, I needed to get a facility to ensure I'm in compliance so I can implement more programs for them," he said.

In May, the goal is expected to become a reality as renovations to the Manhoben Care Center—which DOC recently acquired to serve as the new

Juvenile detention center—is nearly complete.

"It's been a long time coming but we're almost there. The renovation process started around January. I want to thank the Department of Public Safety for working with me in giving me the old facility they were using for offices. Once we got that back, we were able to start renovating. It could have been a lot

sooner but moving forward, I'm grateful and happy we're getting close to the point of completion," he said.

Torres said he is shooting to open the facility up in the first week of May.

"Our outreach inmates are aggressively getting that place ready so we can hit that target date. We're really grateful and fortunate that we're going to

complete that soon," he said.

"I want to thank SNILD, for [helping us] with some of the funding to renovate the facility. I want to thank Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, Department of Public Lands, and of course the Office of Grants Management for helping us acquire second-hand air conditioners for the facility," he added.

Palacios signs into law bill that seeks to establish a right of survivorship

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has signed into law a bill that proposes to establish a right of survivorship for certain causes of action in civil lawsuits.

Palacios recently informed the Legislature that signed House Bill No. 23-61 into Public Law No. 23-17.

Introduced by Rep. John Paul P. Sablan (Ind-Saipan), the legislation was not referred to a House of Representatives committee.

The House unanimously

passed the bill without amendments on July 7, 2023.

The Senate referred the bill to the Committee on Judiciary, Government, and Law. The Senate passed the legislation without amendments last Feb. 9.

Sablan previously stated that the intent of the legislation is to create a statute that gives the right for survivorship to continue their loved one's lawsuit in any course of action.

He said many jurisdictions and states all over the country recognize the right of survivorship for causes

of action in civil lawsuits brought by injured family members who subsequently died before the causes of action have been resolved.

Sablan stated in the bill that Hawaii, for example, has adopted standardized language for recognizing a right of survivorship.

He said the bill applies that same language to recognize such a right in the CNMI.

Sablan said in order to provide a fair period of transition, the application of the right of survivorship is applied retroactively to cases pending within a year of the effective date of this act.



Sablan

CHICKEN & BEER
"CRISPY, CRUNCHY PERFECTION IN EVERY BITE."

WASABI
ONLY \$18.95
FLAVORED CHICKEN

BULFIRE

DELIVERY TIME: 5:30 PM - 11:00 PM
OPERATION HOURS: 5:30 PM - 12:00 MN
LOCATED AT CHALAN KANGA, ADJACENT TO CX SMOKESHED

Call Us (670) 234-3330 / 234-3331

Hafa Adai
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

MAXIMIZE YOUR BUSINESS EXPOSURE

Advertise with us!

We're expanding our platforms to serve you better.

PRINT + ONLINE + SOCIAL MEDIA

saipantribune.com
saipantribune
saipantribuneofficial

Call 670.235-8747

COTA expands Transit CNMI Blue Line 1B

The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority is excited to announce the expansion of the Transit CNMI Blue Line 1B fixed route service will now include Northern Marianas College through some parts of As Lito and Dan Dan on the island of Saipan. Scheduled to commence sometime this April.

With this expansion, NMC students will have expanded options for transportation to and from the As Terlaje campus, fostering greater convenience and opportunities for

educational pursuits.

Whether commuting for classes, activities, or other en-

» Connecting students to NMC campus

gagements, riders can now rely on the Transit CNMI Blue Line 1B to facilitate

their journeys efficiently and affordably priced at just \$0.50 per ride upon presentation of a valid student ID. All riders are able to get the daily arrival/departure schedules by scanning the QR code that is placed at each bus stop or they can simply contact COTA's One-Call/One-Click Transportation Information Resource Center

at (670) 236-2682 for further information regarding the arrival/departure schedules.

Furthermore, the expansion of routes benefits not only students but also the general public.

The Blue Line 1B now covers various amenities such as coffee shops, grocery stores, gym facilities, places of worship, social assistance programs, and more, providing convenient access to essential services for all.

"Enhanced services to NMC allow our residents to access affordable transportation options as they pursue their educational goals and objectives," said Gov. Arnold I. Palacios.

"The inclusion of NMC in the new route is part of this Administration's efforts to aggressively expand and build upon COTA's services to offer safe, reliable, efficient, and environmentally friendly solutions to meet our islands' needs," said Lt. Gov. David I. Apatang.

"Around April of this



COTA

Northern Marianas College students will have expanded options for transportation to and from the As Terlaje campus after Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority announced the expansion of the Transit CNMI Blue Line 1B fixed route service.

year, our goal is to launch Transit CNMI Blue Line 1A which will run from the NMC through Middle Road, up around the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. facility, around the Garapan district then back to NMC," said Alfreda Camacho Maratita, special assistant for Public Transportation for the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority.

Daily service runs from

6:30am to 8:30pm ChST offering a reliable transportation option for residents throughout the day. Each trip on the Blue Line 1B is priced at \$1. Discounted fares are priced at \$0.50 for students, veterans, active military and their families, senior citizens, and individuals with disabilities. Day passes are also available for \$5 per day to the general public, or a discounted rate of \$2.50 per day for students, veterans,

active duty military and their families, senior citizens, and individuals with disabilities.

Passengers can pay on the bus with cash (exact change only) or obtain bus passes from 7:30am to 4:30pm Monday through Friday at COTA's Administrative Building and Maintenance Facility located at 12841 Lower Base Dr. Saipan, CNMI.

"We would like to thank the community for their continued support and understanding as we continue to do our very best to launch more routes on the island of Saipan for everyone to enjoy," added Maratita.

To stay updated on the latest developments regarding the expansion of COTA's fixed bus route, fares, times, and list of stops, we encourage everyone to follow our social media channels @transitcnmi and visit our website transit.cnmi.gov. (PR)



Located at the Armalech Building in Chalan Kanoa across the intersection leading to the U.S. Post Office. For reservations or for more information, call 234-8894, 287-8895 and 488-8899.



HAPPY GRADUATION

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PV2 Joseph Kisa of Saipan completed 10 weeks of intensive basic training at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri on March 28, 2024. Kisa is with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 48th Infantry Regiment. After his graduation, he reported to Fort Gregg-Adams.

Butcher & Meat Cutter (Saipan, MP)

Receive, inspect, and store meat upon delivery to ensure meat quality. Adhere to State & USDA-FSIS law, regulations, standards and all food safety regulations. Cut, trim, bone, tie, and grind meats, such as beef, pork, poultry, and fish, to prepare meat in cooking form. Cut, trim, or prepare consumer-sized portions of meat for use or sale in retail establishments. Wrap, weigh, label, and price processed meat. Prepare and place meat cuts and products in display counter, so they will appear attractive and catch the shopper's eye. Prepare special cuts of meat ordered by customers. Shape, lace, and tie roasts, using boning knife, skewer, and twine. Record quantity of meat received and/or issued to restaurants and customers. Keep and maintain records of meat delivered and sold. Cure, smoke, tenderize and preserve meat. Negotiate with companies or clients to determine order details. Do other related duties as assigned from time to time.

Minimum Requirements: High School graduate with 1-year experience in the position.

Send updated Resume & supporting credentials to Marianas Meat Harvesting Corporation ATTN: DOYI KIM, P.O. Box 506003, Saipan MP96950 marianasmeatharvesting@gmail.com or saipanwinners5@gmail.com

Building Maintenance & Repairer (Saipan, MP)

Monitor, repair, install, and perform routine maintenance of building and building equipment. Perform maintenance of electrical systems such as replace light bulbs and sockets, clean and repair circuit breaker panels etc. Assist in the setup of ventilation, refrigeration and generators, water heater, and conduct repairs when necessary. Do preventative maintenance programs and procedures. Maintain heating and plumbing systems to ensure functionality. Install, monitor, and inspect alarm systems (fire, protection) and schedule repairs when needed. Perform manual repairs when necessary such as fix locks, replace windows or doors, etc. Conduct general upkeep procedures and other tasks as assigned such as painting, carpentry, and plumbing. Install and monitor CCTV functionality, fire exit lights, fire alarms, fire extinguishers and do repair or replacement if needed. Respond to emergencies, including but not limited to: structural problems, equipment failures, plumbing and electrical issues, fire alarms, and power failures at all hours. Develop, implement, and maintain both routine and specialized maintenance schedules. Prepare repair cost documentation including material lists, labor estimates, and repair schedules. Monitor building safety and ensure compliance with CNMI & Federal codes and regulations. Prepare and maintain records of repairs and maintenance. Perform related tasks as required.

Minimum Requirements: High School graduate with 2-year experience in the position.

Send updated Resume & supporting credentials to P&A CORPORATION ATTN: DOYI KIM, P.O. Box 506003, Saipan MP96950 saipanwinners5@gmail.com



A Northern Mariana Islands Social Service JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT (1) SHELTER WORKER

For more information or interested applicants can email: info@karidat.org to receive a position description and fillable form.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED: A completed application form, copy of diploma/degree, resume/bio-date; current police clearance within 6 months and a copy of valid driver's license.

NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE.

CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY, April 5, 2024 AT 4:00 PM

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

AP COMPUTER SCIENCE TEACHER: Bachelor's Degree in Computer Information Systems (may be foreign equivalent). For employment located in Saipan, the CNMI, AP Computer Science Teacher to provide theoretical and applied instruction on computer functionality. Instruct students on how computers work, including the basic science and computer science behind their operation and the hardware and software built on those foundations. Integrate competencies, goals, and objectives into lesson plans.

Send resume to:
CALVARY INTERNATIONAL MISSION
dba AGAPE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
P.O. Box 10001 PMB 466, Saipan, MP 96950
Or email to: acssaipan@gmail.com



Zoning Office

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Zoning Office will be closed from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm on Friday, April 5, 2024 for Professional Development. Regular office hours will resume on Tuesday, April, 9, 2024. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

ARTMAN CORPORATION

SERVICES will be:

- Sewer Pumping
- Snake Wiring
- Portable Toilet Rental
- Portable Hand Wash Station
- Handling Recyclable Wastes



PMB 122 Box 10000
MP 96950, Lower Base
artmancorporation@gmail.com
Please Call: 234-8079 | 287-8079

Marciano receives overwhelming support at confirmation hearing

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Retired teacher Luella Ichihara Marciano received overwhelming support from many people in the community during a confirmation hearing yesterday for her appointment as resident executive of the Indigenous Affairs Office.

Among those who testified before the Senate Executive Appointments and Government Investigations

Committee to support Marciano's nomination are former lawmaker Christina M. Sablan, Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan), John Oliver Gonzales, Department of Labor Secretary Leila Staffler, Gary Sword, Pete Perez, Emma Perez, and Gordon Marciano.

Those who opposed Marciano's appointment are couple Richard and Liana Hofschneider.

Marciano thanked Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt.

Gov. David M. Apatang for trusting her to lead the Indigenous Affairs Office.

Marciano said when she received a call from Palacios 62 days ago to be exact, she did ask governor if he was really sure that he wanted her to lead the Indigenous Affairs Office.

"I was enjoying retirement. And I do miss having that coffee time with my husband. But when you receive a call, especially from the governor, you ask yourself, how can we help

our governor? How can we help our people?" she said.

Marciano said she told her-

self to get in there.

"So, I am here. I am reporting to assist one of our offices under the Palacios-Apatang administra-

tion," Marciano said.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Retired teacher Luella Ichihara Marciano takes her oath before testifying yesterday at the Senate Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations Committee's confirmation hearing for her appointment to serve as resident executive for the Indigenous Affairs Office.

BABAUTA

From page 1

received by the retirees of the NMI Retirement Fund and their eligible survivors' benefits.

Babauta urged NMI Settlement Fund trustee Joyce C.H. Tang to cease any alleged unauthorized collection of overtime from retirees' or their eligible survivors' benefits.

"Any such actions should be brought before the court for approval to ensure adherence to the terms of the settlement and protects the rights of the settlement class," said the senator in her letter to Tang last Monday.

She recalled that Betty Johnson's class action against the CNMI government in 2009 resulted in a settlement agreement intended to fully resolve all disputes related to the CNMI government's failure to properly fund the NMI Retirement Fund.

Babauta said as she under-

stands it the settlement agreement encompassed all potential claims, including those related to overtime pay,

She said the settlement agreement clearly outlined all agreed-upon compensations which included a revision of benefits for the settlement class while preserving their constitutional rights to accrued and unimpaired benefits.

Therefore, the senator said, any additional deductions from retiree benefits, such as overtime collection, would require prior court approval from the federal court that oversaw the settlement.

Babauta said pursuant to the settlement agreement, specifically 4.4 Minimum Settlement Fund Balance, states that "Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 4.3, if the trustee determines that the Settlement Fund is within 30 days of having a low balance, the trustee shall give notice of a low balance to the CNMI.

She said "the notice shall

include a statement of the amount necessary to make bi-weekly payments to settlement class members in the amount of 75% of their full benefit payments."

Babauta said if there is no published notice of a "low balance" required by Section 4.4 of the settlement agreement then, a diminished retirement pension is unnecessary.

In 2013, U.S. District Court for the NMI designated Judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood gave final approval to the global settlement agreement in Johnson's class action against the CNMI government and the NMI Retirement Fund.

Under the global settlement, the CNMI agrees to make annual payments that will enable the settlement to fund at least 75% of class members' benefits.

With the court's final approval, all NMI Retirement Fund assets were transferred to the Settlement Fund, as administered by Tang as a court-appointed trustee.

for marketing the program.

After refusing to respond to the committee's questions, the committee found him in contempt, and Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) transmitted to Attorney General Edward Manibusan a "certification of statement of contempt" pertaining to Villanueva.

The speaker cited 1 CMC Section 1306(a), which states that "a person shall be in contempt if the person...having appeared fails or refuses to testify under oath or affirmation."

"Villanueva is clearly in contempt as he has refused to answer any questions posed by the committee regardless of the question's incriminatory nature. Consequently, the committee, by majority vote of its members, determined that his actions established contempt and moved to report this fact to the House of Representatives on March 5, 2024, by a unanimous vote," the speaker said.

Last March 22, Villanueva self-surrendered to the Department of Corrections pursuant to a Superior Court issued arrest warrant dated March 11. He bailed himself out soon after.

CONTEMPT

From page 1

Villanueva's lawyer, Keith Chambers, initially argued that his client could not enter a plea as he is entitled to a preliminary hearing to determine if there was probable cause to charge Villanueva with contempt.

In addition, Chambers claimed that the information filed against his client was defective and omitted information.

However, Naraja denied the motion stating that if a judge had already signed the warrant for Villanueva's arrest, probable cause had already been determined. This prompted the defense to enter a plea of not guilty.

After the hearing, Chambers and Villanueva refused to comment while assistant attorney general James Kingman said he appreciated the judge's decision not to postpone the arraignment.

"On the last minute, the defense filed a motion trying to push the arraignment off and the judge was not inclined to do so, which I appreciate. There are procedures to these

things, and I certainly hope that everyone follows them appropriately otherwise we're just going to continue to see delays," he said.

The contempt charge filed against Villanueva came after he refused to answer the questions of the House Special Committee Federal Assistance & Disaster-Related Funding that is investigating the federally-funded Building Optimism, Opportunities and Stability Together or BOOST program of the previous administration. Villanueva appeared before the committee on March 5, 2024, and invoked his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination when asked questions about BOOST.

Villanueva is the owner of Roil Soil Marketing, which the administration of then-governor Ralph DLG Torres contracted to help market and promote the \$17-million BOOST program in 2022.

According to the House committee that's investigating the BOOST program, the documents it gathered indicated that Villanueva was paid by the previous administration \$215,000 "at the very least,"

OVER

From page 1

and Awareness Month this month, DYS director Vivian Sablan shared in an interview yesterday that it is important to educate the community on how prevalent the issue really is in the CNMI.

Sablan shared that for the past few years, DYS has been maintaining consistent child abuse and neglect reports since FY2020 adding that when comparing the number of cases from FY2020 to FY2023, the numbers are alarming.

Specifically, in FY2020, DYS received 271 child abuse and neglect cases. Meanwhile, in FY2023, DYS had 459 cases. With the 459 cases, DYS is currently tending to 1,214 child abuse victims.

"That's a big jump. But what's more alarming is that we're dealing with over 1,000 victims compared to 700 in FY 2020. These are primary and secondary victims. Primary victims are the ones who were directly affected by the abuse, while secondary victims are either the siblings or

children who were affected emotionally by witnessing the abuse," she said.

Breaking down the number of cases in FY2023; DYS received 245 emotional abuse cases, 202 neglect cases, 115 physical abuse cases, 103 sexual abuse cases, and 148 other cases (this includes domestic violence, minor sex trafficking, truancy, teen pregnancy, etc.).

"We've noticed people are more comfortable to report as we're out there doing outreach programs," Sablan noted.

Sablan said that it's a struggle to provide long-term help for all the victims—especially with only 12 case workers between all three islands—but thanks to its partners, DYS is able to move forward and help as much as they can.

"I feel like we will never have [enough resources], but we try to leverage resources so that's why we work closely with our partners because we cannot do it alone. We only have eight case workers right now active in Saipan, two on Tinian, and two on Rota. Although we want to help families long term, while we work

on these cases, we have new cases coming in. It really is a struggle for the staff, but we have great partners, we share resources, we tap into them for expertise, and we are able to move forward and help serve families," Sablan said.

When asked how the community can help, Sablan said it's best that members of the community take advantage of DYS' outreach programs to learn more about how common child abuse is in the CNMI so they, too, can help spread awareness.

"It's all about getting the community to be aware of what the issue are and not only being aware, but to acknowledge that it exists. We cannot just deny that we have [child abuse cases], as it is very heavily seen here. We don't want to be perceived as the division that takes away children from their homes, we want the community to know that we're here to help. We're just here to intervene, provide the necessary services, make sure the children are safe, and our ultimate goal is to reunify families," she said.

TRULY

From page 1

necessary for them to continue to move forward in the proceedings against Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC.

The chairman and four other commissioners have been working for over a year now without receiving compensation due to Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's non-payment of annual regulatory fee for four years.

The chairman recalled that they had to stay up late working with two assistant attorneys general before the arbitration in the case against IPI.

DeLeon Guerrero said it necessitated in many regards to what caused his recusal from the revocation case against

IPI because there was no executive director for CCC and there was no staff.

"It was a very difficult situation to deal with," DeLeon Guerrero said.

DeLeon Guerrero also stated that having worked with the casino industry for the last six, seven years, he believes there is room for this industry to contribute to the CNMI's economic development.

He underscored the need to revisit the statute on the gaming industry and see how they can improve it, and maybe have all stakeholders participate in the resolution of the future of this industry.

"It would be a win-win situation," the chair said.

The CCC office at the Springs Plaza in Gualo Rai temporarily closed starting Jan. 19, 2023, due to lack of funds.

DeLeon Guerrero said IPI owes CCC and the CNMI government a total of \$79,635,280 in annual license fee, annual regulatory fee, and penalties.

The annual license fee is \$15,502,570 that was due on Aug. 12, 2020 and all the way to 2023, or for a total of \$62,010,250 for four years of IPI's delinquent.

The annual regulatory fee is \$3,150,000 that was due on Oct. 1, 2020 and for each year until 2023, or for a total of \$12,600,000 for four years of delinquent.

All CCC's enforcement actions against IPI for non-compliance with the CCC mandates ended up at \$5 million with \$25,000 in penalties against IPI, which were affirmed by the Superior Court and subsequently by the CNMI Supreme Court.

Whipps Jr. to deliver keynote address at UOG Conference for Island Sustainability

The University of Guam announces that Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr., will be a keynote speaker at the 2024 University of Guam Conference on Island Sustainability.

The conference is scheduled for April 8-15 at the Hyatt Regency Guam, and is a premier gathering of island leaders, scientists, policymakers, and community members committed to building a more sustainable future for island communities.

"We are honored to have President Whipps share his vision and experiences with our conference attendees," said UOG president and CIS2024 co-chair Anita Borja Enriquez. "His keynote address promises to be a powerful and inspiring start to a productive and impactful conference and a great motivator for more regional partnerships."

Whipps is a prominent voice on the international stage, advocating for climate action and the unique challenges faced by island nations. His leadership and support for global and regional initiatives make him a motivating force in many sustainability discussions.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/

Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr. will be the keynote speaker at the 2024 University of Guam Conference on Island Sustainability on April 8-15 at the Hyatt Regency Guam.

"President Whipps is a champion for island sustainability and a global leader in the fight against climate change," said UOG Center for Island Sustainability and Sea

Grant director Austin Shelton. "We are excited to learn more about his recent launch of the Palau Green Growth Initiative and signing of the renewed Compact of Free Association Agreement. His commitment to the future of his island nation and our planet aligns perfectly with our theme of 'Sustainability Endures' for this year's conference."

CIS2024 will explore a wide range of topics related to island sustainability, including climate change adaptation, renewable energy solutions, waste management strategies, and community resilience.

The theme of the 15th conference is "Sustainability En-

dures" and will showcase panels, featured speakers, and presentations made by researchers, communi-

ty advocates, students, and stakeholders from all over the world. Registration for CIS2024 is now open.

For more information about the agenda, hotel information and to register, visit uog.edu/cis2024. (PR)

San Nicolas bill removing deadline on elderly abuse receives support

HAGATNA, Guam—Bill 243.37, authored by Democrat Sen. Dwayne T.D. San Nicolas, received support during its public hearing at the Guam Congress Building in Hagatna on April 1. The bill aims to remove the statute of limitations for financial and property exploitation of an elderly person or individual with disability.

According to the National Council on Aging, up to five million older Americans are abused every year, and the annual loss by victims of financial abuse is estimated to be at least \$36.5 billion.

"Financial exploitation of our man'amko and individuals with disabilities is a heinous crime that should not have a statute of limitations," said San Nicolas. The National Council on Aging also states that in about 60% of elderly abuse incidents, the perpetrator is a family member, usually the spouse or the children of the victim. "The number of exploited elderly is astounding and justifies the creation of the legislation to combat this issue," San Nicolas said. "All of these findings by the National Council on Aging are alarming, something which our man'amko and persons with disabilities need to be protected from by putting the law on their side."

Meanwhile, Guam Attorney General Douglas Moylan said that this bill is much-needed.

"It's about time," said Moylan at the public hearing. "In our court system, there are too many of our man'amko that are being found out in guardianship cases and in probate cases that their lifetime savings have been taken from them, especially from their own family members that are 'caregivers.' As we age everybody's memories through the natural process become not as sharp as they used to be."

During his testimony, he said that the Office of the Attorney General of Guam supports the piece of legislation. "I applaud the sponsor of the bill, Senator San Nicolas, for taking up this challenge," Moylan said. "Our code is in need of protection right now. Our man'amko are in need of protection out there. They need to have the tools to do

that. We, the AG's office, fully endorse it."

If enacted into Guam law, this legislation will remove the statute of limitations in cases of elderly and disabled individuals' financial exploitation and abuse. "As a government entity that serves the people, the Guam Legislature needs to enact legislation that would protect and help the man'amko and people with disabilities find justice in incidents of financial exploitation and abuse," San Nicolas said. "To enact legislation, the elderly victims of financial exploitation and abuse would be able to pursue justice without added worry of a deadline to file a lawsuit." Sen. William Parkinson is a co-sponsor of the bill. This act shall become effective upon enactment. (PR)

Young Author's Showcase on April 6

GUAM—Guam Community College Education Department, in collaboration with the Literacy Navigators Grant Program, invites the public to the Young Author's Showcase on Saturday, April 6, 2024, from 9am to 1pm at GCC's Multipurpose Auditorium.

This year's theme is "Our Island, Our Responsibility". The goal of the program is to celebrate the diversity of children's experiences, identities, languages, and homes. The event is completely free to the public and will showcase the works of young authors from Pedro C. Lujan Elementary School & St. John's Episcopal School. Also in attendance will be several local authors including Catherine Payne, Rufina Mendiola, and Pedro Blas, who will be sharing their experiences with the writing process.

GCC's Education Department's mission is to prepare individuals to be professional educators prepared to empow-

er Guam's youth to become advocates and leaders toward a more sustainable, just, and peaceful society and world. Working with educators in Guam's schools, the Education Department promotes literacy through the development of our students' writing skills through authentic writing opportunities such as Young Authors.

The Literacy Navigators Grant Program works to recover learning loss among local elementary-aged students caused by the pandemic. Throughout the course of the program, the Literacy Navigators have worked as embedded tutors in GDOE schools, hosted numerous seasonal literacy events, and last summer, worked in our local libraries to encourage a lifelong love of reading.

To learn more about the event, send an email to litteracynavigatorsguarant@guamcc.edu or contact us at (671) 735-5641 ext. 1121 or 1122. (PR)

FAC remains the same for April 2024

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. announced that the Fuel Adjustment Charge remains the same at \$0.26469 per kWh for the month of April. Although there has been a slight decrease in the average fuel oil prices, the decrease did not equal or exceed a 4.5% differential of the average per gallon cost of fuel.

The FAC is one of two components that make up the CUC electric rate, which is strictly for fuel and fuel-related purchases. The second component is the CUC base rate, which has not increased since April 2014 and is used to fund operations, projects, debt services, or any nonfuel-related expenses. (PR)

 **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP24-GOV-42400067: PROVISION OF LABOR, MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT FOR THE MONITORING SERVICES FOR THE POST-CLOSURE MAINTENANCE OF THE PUERTO RICO DUMPSITE

SUBMISSION DATE: 10:00 AM CHST APRIL 19, 2024

Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), are soliciting sealed proposals for the Provision of Labor, Materials and Equipment for the Monitoring Services for the Post-Closure Maintenance of the Puerto Rico Dumpsite funded through the 702 Covenant funding by the Office of Insular Affairs, US Department of Interior.

The project package will be available in digital format only beginning **March 20, 2024** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours or online at Vendor Self Service (selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/Vendors/VBids). Proposals must precisely follow the submittal requirements identified in the Scope of Work.

A Pre-Proposal Meeting will be held via Google Meet at **10:00 AM on April 4, 2024**. Questions regarding this RFP may be submitted via email to Ms. Skalan V. Yamada at syamada.cip@gmail.com no later than **4:00 PM ChST April 11, 2024**. All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective proposers.


Proposers located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent Form to the Acting Director of Procurement Services no later than **10:00 AM ChST April 19, 2024**.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria: (1) Qualifications and experience on similar projects - 30%; (2) Past performance with CNMI projects - 30%; and (3) Cost - 40%.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

/S/ Arnold I. Palacios
Governor, CNMI

/S/ Brian S. Nicholas Jr., Acting Director
CNMI Procurement Services

 **DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES • CNMI GOVERNMENT**
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB24-BECQ/DEQ-42400063
SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 29, 2024 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) CLASS 'I' VEHICLE FOR BECQ/DEQ, SAIPAN"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUMS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (<https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/>) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL & COASTAL QUALITY BY APRIL 17, 2024, TO MR. ELI CABRERA VIA EMAIL AT eli.cabrera@becq.gov.mp

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ GERALDINE T. CRUZ
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

HPG INC.

Please take notice that HPG Inc., a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands corporation will be dissolved effective April 3, 2024.

Opinion

Hafa Adail

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXIV, Issue No. 67Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950Mark Rabago EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Another budget-busting porkfest on Capitol Hill

President Joe Biden laughably passes himself off as a budget hawk. The soaring national debt and recent spending bills prove such assertions to be a glaring example of misinformation.

Last week, Congress passed a \$1.2 trillion measure to avert another government “shutdown.” Not surprisingly, it includes billions in pork backed by both Republican and Democratic members. The budget watchdog openthebooks.com counts about 1,400 spending initiatives that reek of bacon. Not a peep out of the president.

“It’s the Mary Poppins method of governing, where a little bit of sugar makes the medicine go down, Adam Andrezejewski, CEO and founder of openthebooks.com, told The National Desk. “Congress needs a little bit of corruption to pass these massive spending bills.”

A previous budget deal—which dealt with six of the 12 appropriations bills that make up discretionary spending—contained nearly 6,000 earmarks at a cost of \$12.7 billion, according to Sen. Mike Lee, a Utah Republican.

Reason magazine’s Eric Boehm highlighted a handful of the most egregious examples of unnecessary federal spending, including \$2.5 million for a kayaking facility in New Hampshire, \$2.7 million for a bike path in a small West Virginia town and \$3.5 million for the outfit that runs Detroit’s annual Thanksgiving parade.

A group backed by former Vice President Mike Pence also compiled a list of what it views as wasteful “woke” pork initiatives, including \$1.1 million for “climate resilience and equity” in Massachusetts, \$200 million for “gender equity and equality action” and \$400,000 to a New Jersey company that provides “gender-affirming clothing.”

House Republicans in 2011 banned earmarks, but Democrats reversed that move a decade later. To be sure, members of both parties eagerly engage in filling the federal trough as a means of currying favor with voters during their perpetual re-election campaigns. Defenders of the process argue that a few billion here and a few billion there have little impact on a multitrillion-dollar spending plan. But that’s the mindset that drives the nation’s descent into oceans of red ink.

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan vetoed an \$88 billion — the number seems almost quaint today — highway and transportation spending bill, which he described as “budget-busting” and “unsound,” adding that “it represents a failure to exercise the discipline that is required to constrain federal spending, especially pork-barrel spending.” Congress, after two tries, mustered the votes to override the veto.

No president since then—Republican or Democrat—has exhibited similar resolve, and Biden will go along to get along. In the meantime, this president proposes \$7 trillion annual budgets that depend on borrowing trillions more. Budget hawk, indeed.

©2024 Las Vegas Review-Journal.



If Biden wants independent votes, he’s going to have to work for them

My parents have a birding dog, a Gordon setter named Tillie. Sometimes I will take her for a walk, and every time we are out and about her hunting instincts kick in when she sees a squirrel. She starts to stalk, walking quietly in a slight crouch, hoping to surprise and then pounce. She’s been doing this for 10 years and she never succeeds at even getting close to snagging a varmint. Why? She’s oblivious to the fact that a human being is right behind her, signaling the squirrel that something is coming. I swear that once a squirrel looked at me while Tillie was in hunting mode and through some form of interspecies communication asked me, “Is this dog oblivious to the fact that she’s attached to you?”

President Joe Biden is acting like Tillie. His squirrel is the growing number of independent voters in swing states, voters who rejected Donald Trump in 2020 and MAGA replicas in 2022. He wants those independents in Arizona, Nevada and Pennsylvania, where their numbers increase every month—produced in no small part by a growing disgust with partisan politics. Team Biden thinks it can win their support by simply reminding independents how terrible Trump is. But — like Tillie — they are oblivious to the fact that they are tethered to something that will give independents pause.

Biden is connected to the Democratic Party. In fact, he is the Democratic Party. And there is no organization more oblivious to how it ignores and disrespects independent voters than the Democratic Party. It’s true, independents broke decisively in 2022 against MAGA candidates whenever and wherever they were on the ballot. But Biden should not mistake that for any affinity among independent voters for the Democratic Party. Far from it.

What’s this you say? What could you possibly be talking about? Trump is the threat! He’s talking about a bloodbath if he doesn’t get the outcome he desires! Surely the Democratic Party is a better alternative in the eyes of independents.

Possibly. But the Democratic Party has a way of insulting independents whenever it gets the chance (believing few independents are actually independent). And they have a dismal record whenever and wherever independents stand up and say, “We don’t want to join a party, but we want to vote in taxpayer-funded primary elections.”

The Democratic Party in the District of Columbia is actively opposing an effort to allow independents to vote in local primaries, the only elections of consequence. The Democratic Party of Florida — along with the Republican Party — filed a lawsuit (unsuccessfully) to prevent a ballot measure for nonpartisan primaries from being on the ballot in 2000. The Democratic Party of Arizona bars independents from voting in presidential preference elections even though

By JOHN OPDYCKE
The Fulcrum

John Opdycke is the founder and president of Open Primaries, a national advocacy organization working to enact and protect open and nonpartisan primaries and enhance the visibility and power of independent voters.



they are publicly funded and administered, and the party rejected a rules change introduced by younger Democrats at the state convention in 2022 that would have made a change. The Democratic Party of Nevada opposed ballot measure 3, which would create a nonpartisan system for state and federal races. New York. Maryland. Kentucky. Oregon. The list goes on.

Some forward-looking Democrats are working to change their own party’s relationship to independent voters. Legislators in New Mexico and Pennsylvania are championing legislation to give independents full voting rights. Democratic leaders in five states, including Nebraska party chairwoman Jane Kleeb, have gone out of their way to change their party rules to allow independents to participate in their primaries. But these voices are a minority within the party. And if Biden really wants to inspire independents in key swing states, he needs to address the role his own party plays in either ignoring or resisting efforts by independents to gain full voting rights.

The traditional Democratic Party playbook is to appeal to independents as if they are “Democrats lite”: Focus on abortion, portray the other side as an existential threat to democracy. It’s not a bad playbook. It’s true that independents rejected almost every Trump proxy in 2022’s competitive races. But Biden should think long and hard about whether the existing playbook will work in 2024. Independents are growing rapidly. The vast majority of independents are dreading a Trump-Biden rematch. Many of them will be looking seriously at third-party candidates.

If Biden wants independent votes, he’s going to have to work for them. And that will involve challenging his own party’s opposition to granting independents full voting rights. He can’t just say “the Republicans are undermining our Democracy” and ignore his own party’s role in maintaining a partisan arrangement that excludes tens of millions of people from participating. He’s got to go further.

Or, like in Tillie’s case, the squirrel will just scamper away.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Why a TikTok ban isn't what we need

The House of Representatives passed a bipartisan bill in March threatening to ban TikTok unless its parent company ByteDance sells the app. It may take the Senate months to address the legislation, which faces some opposition, so a ban is not imminent. But the relative success of this approach highlights the narrow, problematic pathway for data security reform in the U.S. as we continue to avoid real oversight.

The authors of the House bill focused on national security, emphasizing concerns about the Chinese government's access to the data of U.S. citizens who use TikTok. Although dialing up national security concerns was an effective tactic to marshal some consensus, that strategy still may not pass the legislation—and it won't address the many security concerns that dog tech companies beyond TikTok.

The U.S. uses a so-called risk-based approach to tech oversight, which addresses problems only after they have already developed. By contrast, Japan and some European countries use a precautionary approach that tries to anticipate risks.

Tech firms have flourished financially under the U.S. approach: Companies can gather, use and monetize data with few constraints. In theory, such freewheeling innovation presented only limited national security risks as long as the U.S. was the dominant global tech player, competing with allies and partners. But China and wildly influential apps such as TikTok expose how that approach created a regulatory vacuum that affects consumer safety. TikTok might be less concerning if our federal lawmakers had to date taken comprehensive action to protect consumer data.

Instead of pursuing that broader goal, with its recent act the House targets ByteDance as a foreign policy threat and offers frameworks

to designate other "foreign adversary controlled applications." Perhaps most troubling, the bill extends these considerations to persons deemed "subject to the direction or control of a foreign person or entity" without specifying what form such influence might take.

This would create a highly subjective system that encourages targeting based on national origin and passports—not the type of policy that attracts and retains the best and brightest international talent during an era of extreme competition for technical skills. That is to say nothing of the message that it sends to people in the U.S. who have been rocked by increases in anti-Asian discrimination and the Department of Justice's China Initiative, which ended because of its controversial broad scrutiny of Chinese academics but which some lawmakers have sought to revive.

A common sense alternative would be to create guardrails that apply to all firms operating in the U.S. That would honor Congress' mandate to regulate commerce among states that currently have widely varying laws governing data.

It would also allow the U.S. to better align with its global democratic allies and partners, most of which already have comprehensive data security protections for their citizens. Indeed, though China allows alarmingly broad government access to data, it is ahead of the U.S. on protecting consumer data from corporations. For example, China's Personal Information Protection Law largely aligns with Europe's General Data Protection Regulation, with both measures tackling corporate handling of personal information.

Action from the U.S. president and Congress is necessary but not sufficient. A complementary strategy in the private sector would be creating metrics to rate companies based on their data security to

By **AYNNE KOKAS**

Los Angeles Times

Aynne Kokas is the author of "Trafficking Data: How China Is Winning the Battle for Digital Sovereignty."



help investors consider these issues in stock valuation, much like metrics tracking corporate environmental practices. Another possibility is industry standards for data security, comparable to Energy Star ratings that tell consumers a product is energy efficient.

From both the private and public sectors, there should be more funding for data security education through schools and libraries to teach children and adults how to think more critically about the use of their data. To counter the grip that online life has on many users, we also need greater investments for in-person communities, which can strengthen offline advocacy for consumer interests.

The House bill is not what we need. If the flood of calls from TikTok and its users to congressional offices is any indication, it's also not what many want. The legislation may, however, show the limit of what the current U.S. regulatory landscape can achieve. In a world increasingly defined by data, we'll have to expand beyond those limits.

NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

Red Caesarism: Paranoid Paroxysm

LITERARY NOOK

By **JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka "Pepe Batbon" Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. Joey is the Poet Laureate of Tinian, celebrating 40 years in the CNMI.



Raising Social Security's retirement age is the least bad option

Republicans in Congress have proposed a plan to shore up the Social Security Trust Fund, mainly by slowly increasing the retirement age from 67 to 69. Despite an immediate objection from President Joe Biden and top Democrats, raising the retirement age is crucial to the long-term health of Social Security.

As recently as 2020 Social Security took in more revenue than it paid in benefits. But the tables have turned, and the federal government expects the program take in \$1.17 trillion this year and pay out \$1.32 trillion. The \$150 billion shortfall will be made up by drawing down on the program's \$2.63 trillion trust fund.

That \$150 billion may seem manageable, but the problem grows larger each year. By 2032, the government expects benefits to exceed revenues by about \$500 billion annually. If we do nothing, the Social Security Trust Fund will be exhausted by 2034. If it gets to that point, the law requires a 23% cut in benefits across the board to ensure money coming into the program equals that flowing out.

No one wants to see benefits cut. The financial shock to seniors would be enormous. Yet, unless some radical measures are taken, cuts will be almost impossible to avoid. Raising the retirement age to 69 would bring the annual growth of Social Security costs in line with the annual increase in revenue by 2030, according to an analysis by the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

It's not like such a move would be unprecedented. When Social Security last faced an insolvency crisis, in 1983, Congress passed a bipartisan solution that included raising the retirement age from 65 to 67 in recognition of increasing lifespans. The same rationale remains true today. Between 1950 and 1980, the life expectancy of 65-year-olds increased by 2.5 years from 78.9 to 81.4. From 1980 to 2019, it increased an additional 3.2 years to 84.6.

Critics argue that raising the retirement age unfairly punishes the poor because the life expectancy of lower-income Americans has risen far less than that of higher-income Americans. However, life expectancy is only one part of the picture. What also must be considered is the total amount retirees can expect to receive.

Under the Republican proposal, the lowest-quintile group by income could expect to receive more in benefits than they pay in contributions, while it's the opposite for the highest-quintile group. Consider an analysis of rising life expectancies by the Social Security

By **KARL W. SMITH**

Bloomberg Opinion

Karl W. Smith is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. Previously, he was vice president for federal policy at the Tax Foundation and assistant professor of economics at the University of North Carolina.



Administration in 2009 that found the lowest-income quintile participating in the Social Security system saw their lifetime benefits boosted by about 12%. On the other hand, the highest-income quintile saw their lifetime incomes fall by 1.3%.

Moreover, this gap has grown over time. Over the past 25 years, the highest quintile has seen its net benefits shrink by 2.6 percentage points, while the net benefits for the lowest quintile have remained steady. So, even as higher-income Americans live longer, their Social Security return is declining.

There are a few reasons for this. First, Social Security benefits are taxable for higher income Americans. Second, much of the reduction in life expectancies for poor Americans is related to the opioid crisis, which primarily impacts Americans under 65. Finally, the program is fundamentally designed to provide a greater return on contributions from lower-income Americans.

Rather than raising the retirement age, Biden would seek to extend the life of Social Security through tax increases on those making more than \$400,000 a year, in effect repealing the Trump administration tax cuts for that group of Americans, a move that would boost revenues by about \$125 billion annually. Yet, that would still not cover even this year's shortfall, and would only extend solvency by a few years. In contrast, raising the retirement age would create savings that grow over time.

Stabilizing Social Security's finances has long been one of Congress's most challenging tasks. The sole major successful effort, the 1983 reform, was predicated on recognizing that longer lifespans necessitated an increase in the retirement age. Biden and leading Democrats must accept that the same reality holds true today even if it jeopardizes his re-election campaign. It's the least bad option.






CANDIDATE TRUMP IN A SLUMP

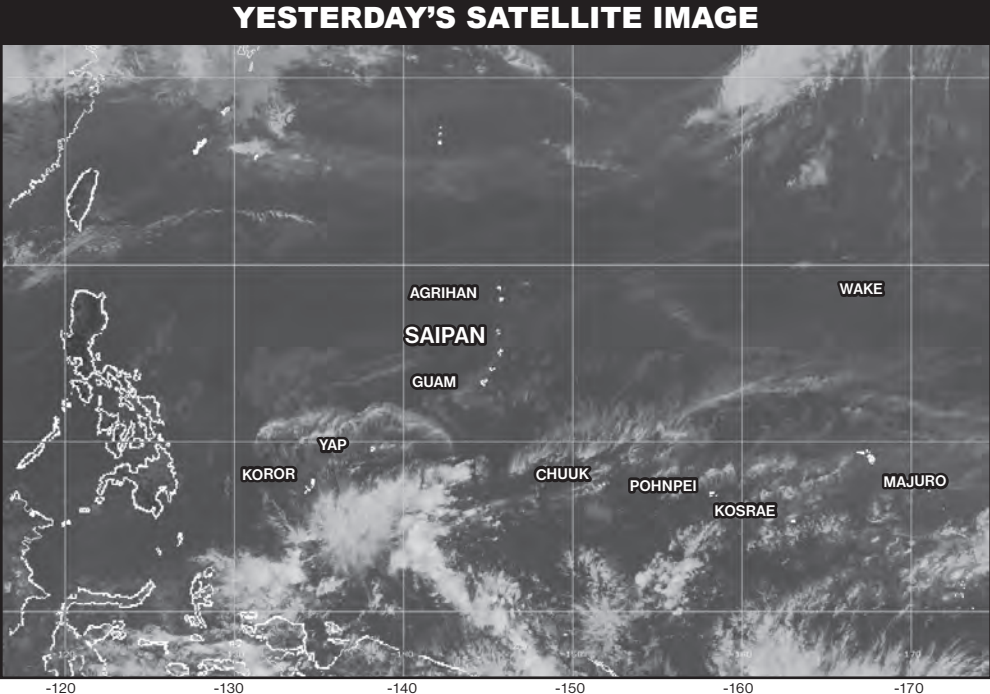
Trump in total denial with a persecution complex smile In New York, Wash. D.C., Georgia, and Florida on trial 88 felony indictments? 91? are a severe financial drag On retribution he brags, judges impose another gag Candidate D.J. Trump finds himself in a serious slump Millions in fines a bigly hump, hard to get a bond bump From former staff many leakers, poor sales on his sneakers People want to hear more from US military truth speakers Former POTUS 45 has little money available he can use Is that why he's doomed to lose? Voters will have to choose.

ZEITGEIST: BIGLY BLIGHTER CAMPAIGN FIGHTER

POTUS 45 is suffering from a bigly blight Even though GOP sycophants offer no fight He gets high ranking as polls reach a new height On what "crooked left wing media" shed light He fights for political survival with all his might He is not going "gentle into that good night" The world is aware of his financial legal plight the GOP knows he's 'non compos mentis' not right Yet thousands donate to his campaign web site The time until his various trials is getting tight Justice for all under a flag of red, blue, and white Oversight committee indictments are not trite Bible sales are slow for the hypocritical parasite I want to tell the blatherskite to go fly a kite.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
									
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph, gusting to 30 mph in the afternoon.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph, gusting to to 30 mph in the afternoon.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	
87°	77°	87°	77°	87°	77°	87°	77°	87°	77°



Satellite imagery showing partly cloudy skies and spotty light showers over the Marianas. Increasing clouds and showers approaching front the east. Latest altimetry data showing seas 5 to 8 feet in the coastal waters.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	87° / 79°	
Palau	Showers	86° / 78°	
Yap	Mostly Sunny	87° / 79°	
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	87° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Cloudy	88° / 78°	
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	87° / 83°	
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 83°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:11 AM	6:29 PM
Thursday	6:10 AM	6:29 PM
Friday	6:09 AM	6:29 PM
Saturday	6:08 AM	6:30 PM
Sunday	6:08 AM	6:30 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	1:33 AM	12:56 PM	-
Thursday	2:27 AM	1:59 PM	-
Friday	3:17 AM	3:01 PM	-
Saturday	4:03 AM	4:02 PM	-
Sunday	4:47 AM	5:01 PM	-

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235.3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF APRIL 1, 2024

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:10AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA184	10:25PM	4:10AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily	UA192	10:25PM	6:15AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam	UA184/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	6:10AM	Daily	7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily	7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday
GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday
SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Fair	72° / 60°	
Beijing	Fair	65° / 46°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	81° / 76°	
Honolulu	Showers	81° / 70°	
London	Showers	61° / 45°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	71° / 53°	
Manila	Fair	95° / 80°	
Melbourne	Rain	61° / 48°	
Miami	Mostly Sunny	79° / 70°	
New York	Clear	53° / 49°	
Osaka	Fair	70° / 49°	
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	57° / 39°	
Busan	Sunny	66° / 39°	
Rome	Partly Cloudy	71° / 54°	
Salem	Mostly Sunny	79° / 51°	
San Francisco	Clear	70° / 49°	
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	73° / 39°	
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	65° / 49°	
Washington, DC	Cloudy	56° / 52°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
4:14 AM	High Tide	1.68	
9:09 AM	Low Tide	1.39	
1:11 PM	High Tide	1.61	
9:13 PM	Low Tide	-0.09	

Business

CROWNE PLAZA RESORT SAIPAN’S MARI BAR

Loco Local BBQ Street Market: Where flavor meets tradition

Mari Bar at Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan is thrilled to announce our Loco Local BBQ Street Market, happening this month on Thursdays, April 4 and April 18, from 5pm to 9:30pm.

Join us for a memorable evening filled with delicious food, refreshing drinks, and vibrant live music. The Loco Local BBQ Street Market will be a celebration of the Marianas' rich culinary heritage.

Indulge in our mouthwatering Loco Local BBQ set, featuring red rice, potato salad, pork BBQ sticks, crispy shrimp rolls, and sauces to pair, including fina'denni and denanche, all for just \$12.

For those seeking quick bites, our Loco Sticks are available for only \$6 each. Quench your thirst with our selection of beverages, including draft beers for \$6, pitcher of beer for \$20, and bucket of beers for \$25.

Enjoy the rhythms of our live band, starting at 6:00 pm as you feast on delicious local cuisine and refreshing, crisp beers.

"We're excited to bring the Loco Local BBQ Street Market to Mari Bar," said Martin Jambor, resort manager. "It's a wonderful opportunity for visitors and locals alike to come together and immerse themselves in our vibrant culture. Guests are in for a real treat to enjoy delicious food curated by chef Zenn Tomokane and chef Jesse Aguon's local cuisine expertise."

Don't miss out on this immersive cultural experience! Join us at Mari Bar at Crowne



CROWNE PLAZA RESORT SAIPAN
Loco Local BBQ Street Market's red rice, potato salad, and pork BBQ sticks.



CROWNE PLAZA RESORT SAIPAN
Loco Local BBQ Street Market's crispy shrimp rolls.



CROWNE PLAZA RESORT SAIPAN
Loco Local BBQ Street Market's Loco Sticks.

Plaza Resort Saipan on Thursdays, April 4 and April 18, from 5pm to 9:30pm, for an evening of delicious bites.

For reservations and inquiries, email cprsaipan@ihg.com or call at (670) 234-6412. For more in-

formation and updates, follow us on social media, Instagram and Facebook @crowneplaza-resortsaipan. (PR)

Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan is a 422-room hotel located in Garapan. Guests will be greeted by the resort's lush tropical gardens

and panoramic view of Micro Beach, with Crowne Plaza's warm and friendly hospitality ensuring a seamless arrival. (PR)

New \$20 minimum wage for fast food workers in California set to start

LIVERMORE, Calif. (AP)—Most fast food workers in California will be paid at least \$20 an hour beginning Monday when a new law is scheduled to kick in giving more financial security to an historically low-paying profession while threatening to raise prices in a state already known for its high cost of living.

Democrats in the state Legislature passed the law last year in part as an acknowledgement that many of the more than 500,000 people who work in fast food restaurants are not teenagers earning some spending money, but adults working to support their families.

That includes immigrants like Ingrid Vilorio, who said she started working at a McDonald's shortly after arriving in the United States in 2019. Fast food was her full-time job until last year. Now, she works about eight hours per week at a Jack in the Box while working other jobs.

"The \$20 raise is great. I wish this would have come sooner," Vilorio said through a translator. "Because I would not have been looking for so many other jobs in different places."

The law was supported by the trade association representing fast food franchise owners. But since it passed, many franchise

owners have bemoaned the impact the law is having on them, especially during California's slowing economy.

Alex Johnson owns 10 Auntie Anne's Pretzels and Cinnabon restaurants in the San Francisco Bay Area. He said sales have slowed in 2024, prompting him to lay off his office staff and rely on his parents to help with payroll and human resources.

Increasing his employees' wages will cost Johnson about \$470,000 each year. He will have to raise prices anywhere from 5% to 15% at his stores, and is no longer hiring or seeking to open new locations in California, he said.

"I try to do right by my employees. I pay them as much as I can. But this law is really hitting our operations hard," Johnson said.

"I have to consider selling and even closing my business," he said. "The profit margin has become too slim when you factor in all the other expenses that are also going up."

Over the past decade, California has doubled its minimum wage for most workers to \$16 per hour. A big concern over that time was whether the increase would cause some workers to lose their jobs as employers' expenses increased.

Japan's central bank survey finds less optimistic manufacturers, but happier service sector

TOKYO (AP)—A key Japanese central bank report said Monday that sentiment among big manufacturers has sagged but that optimism is at a three-decade high among large business outside the manufacturing sector.

The Bank of Japan's "tankan" report said sentiment among large manufacturers, which include auto and electronics giants, declined in March for the first time in a year, standing at plus 11, down two points from December. The average market forecast by Japanese news service Kyodo was 9.

The index for large-scale non-manufacturers, including the service sector, hit a 33-year high at plus 34

points, up two points from the last report in December.

The tankan, carried out every three months, surveys about 9,000 Japanese companies and measures corporate sentiment by subtracting the number of companies saying business conditions are negative from those saying they are positive.

The optimism among the non-manufacturing businesses reflects the return of tourism, both overseas and domestic, which had been hurt by the pandemic. Incoming travelers have recently outpaced pre-pandemic levels.

The downturn in the views among manufacturers reflects production stoppages at Daihatsu Motor Co., a Toyota

Motor Corp. subsidiary that specializes in small vehicles. Daihatsu has acknowledged it didn't carry out proper safety tests.

The Japanese economy has tended to stagnate in recent years, with slow wage increases as well as deflation, or the continuous sliding down of prices, rather than the inflation affecting some parts of the world.

Another negative has been soaring energy prices. Japan imports almost all its oil.

The weakening currency has also hurt some sectors. The U.S. dollar is recently trading at about 150 yen, up dramatically from about 130 yen a year ago.

A weak yen works as a plus

for encouraging tourism. It also helps exporters, like Toyota and Nintendo, by boosting the value of their overseas earnings when converted into yen.

The Bank of Japan raised its benchmark interest rate last month for the first time in 17 years, ending a longstanding policy of negative rates meant to boost the economy.

The bank has an inflation target of 2% that it uses as a benchmark for whether Japan has finally escaped deflationary tendencies. It said monetary policy will remain easy for some time, while noting that wages and profits at companies were improving.

The tankan report's forecast for future sentiment among large manufacturers stood at 10, while the index for large non-manufacturers was 27, both lower than the levels reported Monday.

World

WORLD BRIEFS

Israeli strike on Iran's consulate in Syria killed 2 generals and 5 other officers, Iran says

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP)—An Israeli airstrike that demolished Iran’s consulate in Syria on Monday killed two Iranian generals and five officers, according to Iranian officials. The strike appeared to signify an escalation of Israel’s targeting of military officials from Iran, which supports militant groups fighting Israel in Gaza, and

along its border with Lebanon. Since the war in Gaza began nearly six months ago, clashes have increased between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah militants based in Lebanon. Hamas, which rules Gaza and attacked Israel on Oct. 7, is also backed by Iran. Israel, which rarely acknowledges strikes against Iranian targets, said it had no comment on the latest attack in Syria, although a military spokesman blamed Iran for a drone attack early Monday against a naval base in southern

Israel. Israel has grown increasingly impatient with the daily exchanges of fire with Hezbollah, which have escalated in recent days, and warned of the possibility of a full-fledged war. Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen have also been launching long-range missiles toward Israel, including on Monday. The airstrike in Syria killed Gen. Mohammad Reza Zahedi, who led the elite Quds Force in Lebanon and Syria until 2016, according to Iran's Revolutionary Guard. It also

killed Zahedi's deputy, Gen Mohammad Hadi Hajriahimi, and five other officers.

Gaza medical officials say Israeli strike kills 4 foreign aid workers, driver after delivering food

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP)—An apparent Israeli airstrike killed four international aid workers with the World Central Kitchen charity and their Palestinian driver late Monday, hours after the group

brought in a new shipload of food to northern Gaza, which has been isolated and pushed to the brink of famine by Israel’s offensive. Footage showed the bodies of the five dead at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central Gaza town of Deir al-Balah. Several of them wore protective gear with the charity’s logo. Staff showed the passports of three of the dead—British, Australian and Polish. The nationality of the fourth aid worker was not immediately known. The Israeli military said it was conducting a review “to understand the circumstances of this tragic incident.” World Central Kitchen, the charity founded by celebrity chef José Andrés, said it was aware of the reports and would “share more information when we have gathered all the facts.” “This is a tragedy. Humanitarian aid workers and civilians should NEVER be a target. EVER,” WCK spokeswoman Linda Roth said in a statement. Mahmoud Thabet, a Palestinian Red Crescent paramedic who was on the team that brought the bodies to the hospital, told The Associated Press the workers were in a three-car convoy that was crossing out of northern Gaza when an Israeli missile hit. Thabet said he was told by WCK staff the team had been in the north coordinating distribution of the newly arrived aid and were heading back to Rafah in the south. The source of fire could not be independently confirmed.

Peru's embattled president replaces 6 ministers as lawmakers ask Parliament to remove her

LIMA, Peru (AP)—Peruvian President Dina Boluarte replaced six ministers after they resigned as her government is rocked by a political crisis fueled by an alleged illicit enrichment scandal involving luxury watches. The Cabinet shakeup Monday came as lawmakers submitted to Parliament a request to remove her from office for “permanent moral incapacity” three days after police broke down the front door of her residence to search for the watches as part of an investigation. The request was submitted by lawmakers from various parties including Peru Libre to which Boluarte once belonged. To remove Boluarte, the move requires 87 votes from the 130-seat unicameral Parliament, and so far, five parties that together have 54 votes expressed support for the president following the raid. Boluarte is being preliminarily investigated for allegedly acquiring an undisclosed collection of luxury watches since becoming vice president and social inclusion minister in July 2021 and then president in December 2022. Lawmak-

ers in their request to remove her from office cite the investigation against Boluarte as well as countrywide problems, such as rising crime.

Gunbattle between Haitian police and gangs paralyzes area near National Palace

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)—Heavy gunfire erupted Monday in the downtown area of Haiti’s capital as police battled gang members near the National Palace for several hours. Local media reported that at least one policeman was shot after he and other officers were forced to flee an armored car that was later set on fire. Scores of people were trapped by the gunfire in downtown Port-au-Prince while dozens of others managed to flee. One man who declined to provide his name out of fear for his life told The Associated Press that he was stuck for five hours until police rescued him. “It’s the armored car that covered us (so we could) leave the area,” he said. A spokesman for Haiti’s National Police did not return messages for comment. The latest gunbattle comes more than a month after powerful gangs began attacking key government infrastructure. They have torched police stations, opened fire on the main international airport that remains closed and stormed the country’s two biggest prisons, releasing more than 4,000 inmates. The violence has somewhat subsided in certain areas since the attacks began on Feb. 29, but gunfire still echoes daily. At least 1,554 people have been reported killed up to March 22 and another 826 injured, according to the U.N.

Trump posted \$175M bond to avert asset seizure as he appeals NY fraud penalty

NEW YORK (AP)—Donald Trump posted a \$175 million bond on Monday in his New York civil fraud case, halting collection of the more than \$454 million he owes and preventing the state from seizing his assets to satisfy the debt while he appeals, according to a court filing. A New York appellate court had given the former president 10 days to put up the money after a panel of judges agreed last month to slash the amount needed to stop the clock on enforcement. The bond Trump is posting with the court now is essentially a placeholder, meant to guarantee payment if the judgment is upheld. If that happens, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee will have to pay the state the whole sum, which grows with daily interest. If Trump wins, he won't have to pay the state anything and will get back the money he has put up now.

A Beautiful Soul, Forever Loved, Never Forgotten

Margaret Quitano Sablan McQuay

Lovingly known as “Marge or Adig”
January 26, 1950 - March 23, 2024

Margaret, passed away peacefully at the age of 74, surrounded by her daughter, granddaughters, and siblings. She was born in Saipan to †Elena Roberto Quitano and †Pedro Dela Torre Sablan. Margaret was a devoted mother and grandmother who always put her family first. She was firm and feisty but was also kindhearted, thoughtful, generous and caring who gave not only of her time but also any other assistance she could provide. Margaret was known to be a great cook and loved baking, and enjoyed preparing dishes for family occasions. Margaret left Saipan after high school and became a flight attendant, married and had her children. She lived an active life in Colorado, California and Hawaii. She was a long time staff for the Marianas-Hawaii Liaison Office in Hawaii from mid 1990 to mid 2000. She moved back to Saipan to be with her mom and siblings. Margaret felt content being back home and embraced the love of dear family and friends.

Margret’s love and memories will forever live in the hearts of her children and family: **Hayden Jonathan; Jennifer Elaine (Hope Gianna, Maya Elaine); and Michael James Jr. & Makenzie (Louie James)**

Daughter at Heart: **Agnes Gloria DLG. & Francisco S. Ada & Family**

Sister-In-Law: **Magdalena Barcinas Sablan & Family**

Reared Brothers, Sisters, and In-Laws: **Vicente Q. & Erika Camacho & Family; Elizabeth C. Sablan & Family; George Q. Camacho & Lydia Sablan & Family; Juan Q. & Luisa C. Camacho & Family; Ellen Q. Camacho; Manuel Q. Camacho & Family; and Emerita Q. Camacho**

Father of children: **Michael James McQuay, Sr.**

She will also be missed by numerous aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, godchildren, and friends.

In her new eternal life, Margaret now joins her parents, †Pedro Dela Torre and †Elena Roberto Quitano Sablan; her brother, †Dr. Manuel Quitano Sablan, her reared parents: †Vidal Acosta Camacho and †Justa Quitano Camacho; her reared sister, †Rita Quitano Camacho; and, her reared brother in law, †Ernest Mangarero Sablan.

Mass for the repose soul of Margaret is offered daily at 6:00 a.m. at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral and at 6:00 p.m. at San Jose Church.

Funeral services and last respects for our beloved Margaret will be held on Monday, April 8, 2024 at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral beginning at 8:00 a.m. The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m., followed by the Rite of Committal at the Mount Carmel Cemetery where she will be laid at peaceful rest with her beloved parents.

For all your love, prayers, thoughts and kindness, Thank You and Si Yu’us Ma’ase

The children and families of
†Margaret Quitano Sablan McQuay

Life & Style

Japan's royal family makes formal debut on Instagram

» As world's oldest monarchy tries to draw youth

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's imperial family made an Instagram debut with a barrage of posts on Monday, hoping to shake off their reclusive image and reach out to younger people on social media.

The Imperial Household Agency, a government agency in charge of the family's affairs, posted 60 photos and five videos showing Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako's public appearances over the past three months.

The agency said they wanted the public to have a better understanding of the family's official duties and that Instagram was chosen because of its pop-



ularity among youth.

By Monday evening, their verified account Kunaicho_jp had more than

270,000 followers.

The first photo published was of the imperial couple sitting on a sofa with their 22-year-old daughter Princess Aiko, all smiling as they marked New Year's Day. Other postings also included the Imperial couple's meetings with foreign dignitaries, including Brunei Crown Prince Haji Al-

Muhtadee Billah his wife.

A video of Naruhito addressing well-wishers during his Feb. 23 birthday celebrations garnered over 21,000 views in less than a day.

So far, the images are limited to the family's official duties and do not include private or candid moments. The agency said it was consider-

ing adding activities of other royal members.

"It's nice we get to see a bit of their activities because we hardly know what they are doing," said Koki Yoneura, a 21-year-old student. "It's good that they seem to be a bit closer to us."

Yukino Yoshiura, also a student, said she was excited to see more posts about Princess Aiko. "Aiko-sama is close to our age and just graduated from university, so I'm very happy to be able to see her images," she said while calling the princess with the respectful honorific "sama."

However, both said they didn't plan on following the royal family's Instagram account.

The Japanese imperial family's social media debut comes 15 years after Britain's royal family joined X, formerly Twitter, in 2009.

"I actually assumed they already had one. So I am surprised it's just now that they are making one," said

Daniela Kuthy, an American student. She said the content seemed "very PR-clean," but that wasn't necessarily a negative thing.

Naruhito's father, Emperor Emeritus Akihito — who abdicated the throne in 2019 — and his wife were popular during their time. But currently, the royal family's fans largely belong to older generations.

Palace officials had been considering using social media to get more people interested in the family and their activities. Last year, the agency set up a team of experts to study the effects of using social media on the imperial family.

The agency had become cautious after the Emperor's niece Mako Komuro and her commoner husband faced a severe backlash on social media and in tabloids following concerns over her mother-in-law's financial situation, causing her marriage to be delayed. She also declined to receive a dowry as the public did not fully celebrate her union.

James Patterson launches true crime series on Fox Nation

NEW YORK (AP)—James Patterson is launching a true crime series on the streaming service Fox Nation. "Unsolved With James Patterson," hosted by the million-selling author, premieres Monday and will air in three segments.

According to Fox Nation, Patterson's series will include a trio of unsolved homicide cases: the death of a Louisiana schoolteacher who became increasingly unstable and locked down in her home with guns and cameras before being found with a shotgun wound to the head; a Utah student who joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and soon after disappeared; and an altruistic San Francisco resident who disappeared and

was later found dismembered.

"I was totally gripped by these cases," Patterson said in a statement. "The fact that they are real-life stories—and that we may help bring justice to the victims and their families—is very special."

The series will include interviews with friends, relatives and law enforcement officials.

Patterson, whose books have sold more than 400 million copies, has written numerous thrillers, along with nonfiction books about the Kennedys and John Lennon, among others. Last week, Fox Nation announced it had reached a deal with Martin Scorsese to host, narrate and produce an eight-part religious docudrama called "Martin Scorsese Presents: The Saints."

Barbara Rush, actor who co-starred with Frank Sinatra and Paul Newman among others, dies at 97

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Barbara Rush, a popular leading actor in the 1950 and 1960s who co-starred with Frank Sinatra, Paul Newman and other top film performers and later had a thriving TV career, has died. She was 97.

Rush's death was announced by her daughter, Fox News reporter Claudia Cowan, who posted on Instagram that her mother died on Easter Sunday. Additional details were not immediately available.

Cowan praised her mother as



Barbara Rush appears at the 2019 TCM Classic Film Festival - Opening Night Gala of "When Harry Met Sally" in Los Angeles on April 11, 2019.

"among the last of 'Old Hollywood Royalty' and called herself her mother's 'biggest fan.'"

Spotted in a play at the Pasadena Playhouse, Rush was given a contract at Paramount Studios in 1950 and made her film debut that same year with a small role in "The Goldbergs," based on the radio and TV series of the same name.

She would leave Paramount soon after, however, going to work for Universal International and later 20th Century Fox.

"Paramount wasn't geared for developing new talent," she recalled in 1954. "Every time a good role came along, they tried to borrow Elizabeth Taylor."

Disturbing secret revealed as farmstead changes hands

DEAR ABBY: I need a second opinion. My grandfather sold me an old farmstead that has been in the family for 200 years. Last week, he showed me a wooded area behind the barn with a human skull. He told me that when his father died more than 50 years ago, he was curious about how long it would take a body to decompose, so he left his body in the woods to keep track of its progress. He has 50 years' worth of pictures and notes. He told the rest of the family that Great-Grandpa had been cremated, and apparently no one questioned him about the ashes.

At this point, the skull is all that's left. I checked with a lawyer, who tells me that in my state no laws were broken. That said, I don't want my great-grandfather's skull sitting in the woods behind my barn! My husband says I should quietly bury it, burn the pictures and the notes and forget about it. That just doesn't feel right to me.

It feels like I'm helping my grandfather get away with something and it feels "icky." Should I tell the rest of the family, or continue allowing them to believe that Great-Granddad was cremated? I'm resenting my grandfather for putting me in the middle of this, and any advice you have would be greatly appreciated.

BOUGHT MORE THAN I BARGAINED FOR

DEAR BARGAINED: Your letter is a first. Why do I get the impression that your grandfather must have HATED

his father to have treated his remains so disrespectfully? The farmstead and everything that goes with it is yours now to keep or dispose of.

What you need to do is decide whether to donate your great-grandfather's skull to a medical or dental school (or coven?), place it in a columbarium or bury it on your property. As to whether to tell the rest of the family, what positive thing would be accomplished by sharing this unpleasantness with them? You are a caring individual; let your conscience be your guide.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I'm a full-figured 25-year-old woman who lives at home. My family has three dogs. Every night, I go into my mother and father's bedroom to pick up the youngest one to hold for a few minutes and say goodnight. The dog likes to sleep closer to the middle of the bed, so I need to bend over to reach the dog. When I bend over, my mother gives me a "look" because she says my shirt starts to reveal my body and I should be "mindful" of my dad.

I wear long T-shirts, long pants, and sometimes bras when I'm around the house because I'm trying to be mindful of my dad and younger brother. I want to be free to not think I need to cover up when I'm doing something small like picking up the dog. Dad is a good man. He has never disrespected me in any way as I matured into a woman, so my mother's extra

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



"carefulness" bothers me. What should I do?

JUST WANT MY DOG

DEAR JUST WANT: Because at 25 you are still living under your mother's roof, you should respect her wishes. Once you get a place of your own, you can bounce around as much as you wish.

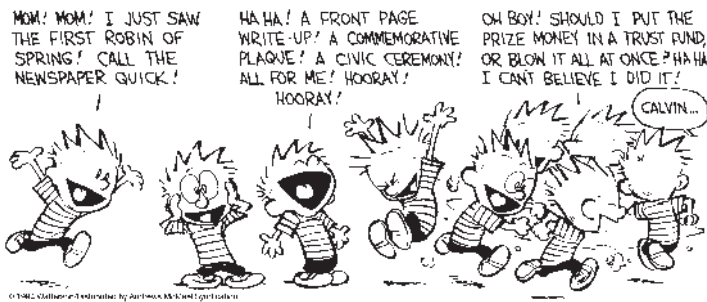
■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable — and most frequently requested — poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby — Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

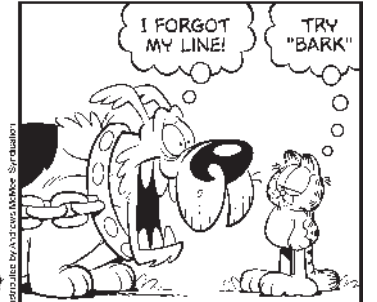
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



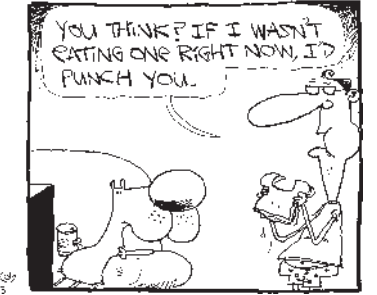
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Small fruit pie
5 Moving truck
8 French cleric
12 "Sad to say..."
13 —de- France
14 Repast
15 Route for cyclists
17 Annoys
18 Handle
19 "Amen to that!"
21 Leftovers recipe
24 Lad
25 Garage job
28 Bath powder
30 Remit
33 Greek vowel
34 Lair for bears
35 Tennis great
36 Actor
37 Fashion's Cassini
38 Nerd's kin
39 Capita lead-in

DOWN

41 Nitwit
43 Bowler's goal
46 Orange variety
50 Second-hand
51 Bartlett alter-native
54 Misplace
55 Jungfrau, e.g.
56 Messes up
57 Cold War initials
58 Verily
59 Earring site
1 Bar bills
2 "I cannot tell —"

Solution time: 23 mins.

O	L	A	V	T	I	C	R	A	S	P
R	E	N	O	A	S	I	E	M	U	S
R	O	A	D	S	T	E	R	M	I	L
K	I	A	C	M	I	N	U	S		
P	L	E	A	S	T	U	E	S		
A	I	L	S	P	O	L	L	S	T	E
L	E	I	O	U	T	A	I	R	D	A
M	U	E	N	S	T	E	R	S	E	A
A	L	U	M	P	O	E	M	S		
L	A	P	T	O	P	I	O	U		
A	L	A	I	J	O	K	E	S	T	E
C	O	C	O	O	N	E	C	L	A	R
E	I	O	N	B	O	A	D	I	E	I

Yesterday's answer 4-3

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13					14	
15				16					17	
18							19	20		
			21		22	23		24		
25	26	27		28		29		30	31	32
33				34					35	
36				37					38	
		39	40			41		42		
43	44				45		46		47	48
50					51	52	53			
54					55			56		
57					58			59		

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Cobie Smulders, 42; Adam Scott, 51; Eddie Murphy, 63; Alec Baldwin, 66.

Happy Birthday: Who you associate with will make a difference in how events unfold. Don't let your emotions decide for you. Get the facts, consider your goals and align yourself with like-minded people who can help you reach your destination. Shoot for the stars, and master what you need to know and do to reach your happy place. Your effort will reap rewards. Your numbers are 8, 14, 23, 27, 30, 36, 44.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Digest as much information as possible, and don't put up with anyone's negativity or pressure tactics. Be good to yourself, and protect against anyone who tries to undermine you. A high-energy approach to getting things done will lead to an unexpected opportunity. ****

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Put your life in order and your mind at ease. Take care of unfinished business. Clear your schedule and refill it with pastimes geared toward fitness, health and socializing with people you love. Don't hide your feelings; embrace change and live life your way. **

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Learn something new. Refuse to let anyone crowd your space or come between you and what you want. Visit places that bring back fond memories, and reconnect with old friends. Attend an event that offers guidance and reinforces you are on the right track. *****

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Rely on your instincts and put your energy into whatever brings the highest returns. Refrain from lingering over what to do next; make up

your mind, start the process and don't look back. Take control instead of yielding to someone else's demands. Romance is in the stars. ***

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't let the changes others make tempt you to be a follower. Think for yourself and do what offers the highest return. Control your emotions, and don't put pressure on yourself or others. When in doubt, sit tight. You'll have no regrets. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Read, educate yourself and pay attention. Consider trends and how your skills and connections can help you advance. A partnership will tempt you, but before you engage, consider what others expect of you and if you'll get enough in return. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Look at the possibilities, then approach people who can offer insight into something you want to pursue that will make your space or lifestyle more convenient or comfortable. A social or networking event will open doors to many exciting alternatives. Explore and expand. *****

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Take your time when an opportunity presents itself. Show enthusiasm, make suggestions and change the dynamics of your life. Consider domestic changes that ease stress, contribute to peace of mind and make what you want to achieve accessible. Socialize, and you'll meet someone interesting. **

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't get involved in something that doesn't interest you. It's better to say no than to send the wrong message. Be tactful but direct, offer positive suggestions and go about your business. You'll gain the most by sticking to an agenda. ***

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

3	9			5						
4				8			6			5
		8	5	3					4	
					9				8	
						8				9
				5		1				4
2	6					8	4			7
					7			9		
	3	1				5	8			

Difficulty: ★★★

4/3

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	1	7	9	6	8	5	2	3
5	9	2	1	3	4	6	7	8
3	8	6	5	7	2	9	4	1
9	7	1	6	2	5	8	3	4
8	3	5	7	4	1	2	6	9
6	2	4	8	9	3	7	1	5
7	6	3	4	5	9	1	8	2
1	4	9	2	8	7	3	5	6
2	5	8	3	1	6	4	9	7

Difficulty: **

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

'OPPENHEIMER' (FILM)

Solution: 9 letters

A	B	T	R	B	I	D	O	W	N	E	Y	J	R	W
T	T	A	M	A	B	T	E	R	C	E	S	P	O	T
O	O	T	S	A	M	O	H	T	N	N	G	R	B	S
M	S	L	O	S	N	I	R	O	E	N	L	R	E	I
I	H	O	A	C	U	O	M	I	O	D	P	J	R	T
C	E	C	M	H	S	A	L	D	W	K	E	R	T	N
A	R	K	A	R	D	S	R	A	I	A	C	E	N	E
M	W	D	R	I	B	O	R	T	N	Y	K	G	E	I
B	I	G	D	S	G	T	C	S	E	C	O	D	E	
R	N	O	R	T	W	Y	L	I	I	M	R	L	S	
I	I	L	B	O	H	R	W	L	A	E	D	I	A	K
D	T	D	O	P	V	E	S	L	O	X	H	A	L	D
G	R	W	R	H	L	E	E	I	A	Y	E	S	N	Y
E	A	Y	I	E	L	K	S	A	P	H	D	L	O	E
Y	M	N	S	R	B	L	U	N	T	N	O	S	A	J

©2024 Andrews McMeel Syndication. www.wonderword.com

4/3

Aide, Alden, Alex, Atomic, Bird, Blunt, Bohr, Boris, Cambridge, Christopher, Cillian, Damon, Dane, Darcy, Downey Jr., Drama, Emily, Goldwyn, Gordon, Groves, Jason, Jean, Josh, Kai, Kitty, Leslie, Lewis, Lloyd, Malek, Martin, Matt, Neils, Nolan, Peck, Rami, Robb, Robert, Roger, Scientist, Scott, Sherwin, Strauss, Tatlock, Thomas, Top Secret, World War Two

Yesterday's Answer: Streaming

The NEW Wonderword Grand Millennium #1 in LARGE PRINT is now available at: www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Tatum, Hauser each score 25 as Celtics beat Hornets for 11th win in 13 games



CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Jayson Tatum had 25 points and 10 rebounds, Sam Hauser poured in 25 points on seven 3s and the Boston Celtics avenged an early season loss to the Charlotte Hornets with a 118-104 victory on Monday night.

Kristaps Porzingis added 20 points and Derrick White had 19 points and nine rebounds for the Celtics, who've won 11 of their last 13 games.

Hauser finished 7 of 11 from beyond the arc and the Celtics made 19 3s against the Hornets to avenge a 121-118 overtime loss on Nov. 20 in Charlotte when Miles Bridges hit a game-winning 3 with 6.6 seconds left.

Boston (59-16), which has already clinched the top seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs, is now 27-0 this season when it makes at least 18 3s in a game.

Hauser was quick to attribute his hot shooting—many of which were open looks—to Tatum.

"I feel like we are always making the right pass and making the extra reads," said Hauser, who was 7 of 11 from beyond the arc. "JT (Tatum) draws a lot of traps and and extra help and he's able to make the right plays out of that."

Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla credited Hauser for playing confident, while adding his production is a byproduct of what the Celtics do offensively.

"I think just layers of our offense is what unleashes him," Mazzulla said. "The guys understand that he's a weapon in different ways, and so when we get to the second and third layer of our offense, especially when teams are guarding us a certain way, it really unleashes guys like Sam. And his teammates continuing to trust him and find him within the layers of our offense."

Bridges paced the Hornets with 26 points and 11 rebounds, while Grant Williams added 23 points and Brandon Miller 19 points.



Boston Celtics forward Jayson Tatum (0) shoots against Charlotte Hornets forward Grant Williams (2) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Charlotte, N.C., Monday, April 1, 2024.

Charlotte hung tough for awhile against Boston.

But the Celtics blew the game open in the third quarter, exerting its size advantage as Porzingis scored 11 points to help open a 16-point lead. Porzingis feasted on a Hornets team playing without 7-foot centers Nick Richards and Mark Williams due to injuries.

Hauser then added two dagger 3s in the fourth quarter, stretching the lead to 19. He had five 3s in the second half.

The Celtics dominated the smaller Hornets on the glass 51-40, and grabbed three offensive rebounds on one fourth quarter possession before White scored on a driving layup to put Boston up 111-96 with 5:37 left in the game. The look of exasperation could be seen on the Hornets faces, after being unable to corral a rebound.

Hornets coach Steve Clifford said his team struggled to get its defense set at different times during the game.

"The fastbreak points are totally misleading," Clifford said. "They only had seven, but they had us on our heels for so many possessions because we just didn't get ahead of the ball and get our defense set. To me, watching them play, you have to do that. They're maybe 10th in fastbreak points, but they get the ball up the floor and into things quickly, and those were our worst possessions tonight."

MAGIC 104, TRAIL BLAZERS 106

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Franz Wagner scored 20 points and Orlando escaped with a win over struggling Portland.

Deandre Ayton missed an open baseline jumper at the final

horn for the Blazers, who have lost 10 in a row.

Wendell Carter Jr. had 17 points and 13 rebounds and Jalen Suggs and Paolo Banchero each scored 15 points for the Magic.

Ayton had 20 points and 12

rebounds. Dalano Banton came off the bench with 26 points for Portland. Scoot Henderson, who set up Ayton with the final shot, had 13 points, nine assists and eight rebounds.

PACERS 133, NETS 111

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Tyrese Haliburton scored 27 points and had 13 assists to lead Indiana to a rout of Brooklyn.

Despite being ejected for a flagrant foul midway through the third quarter, Pacers forward Jalen Smith had 17 points and 10 rebounds.

The Nets' Dennis Schroder was called for a technical foul for flailing on the follow-through and hitting Smith's face. Then Smith was called for a flagrant foul and ejected when he retaliated by pushing Schroder. The two had to be separated.

Pascal Siakam added 15 points and Obi Toppin had 14 for the Indiana.

Cam Thomas scored 22 points, Trendon Watford 21 and Mikal Bridges 19 for the Nets.

HAWKS 113, BULLS 101

CHICAGO (AP)—Vit Krejci set career highs with 18 points and six 3-pointers, Bogdan Bogdanovic scored 20 and Atlanta beat Chicago in a matchup between potential play-in tournament opponents.

Krejci made all six field-goal attempts and surpassed his previous highs of 16

points and four 3s, helping Atlanta win for the fifth time in six games.

Dejounte Murray scored 17 points and Clint Capela added 15 points and 11 rebounds as the 10th-place Hawks moved within a half-game of the ninth-place Bulls in the Eastern Conference. Chicago owns the head-to-head tiebreaker after taking two of three from Atlanta and would host a play-in game if the teams finish tied.

DeMar DeRozan led the Bulls with 31 points. Coby White scored 22. Ayo Dosunmu added 15 points, and Andre Drummond had 13 points and 18 rebounds.

SUNS 124, PELICANS 111

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Devin Booker scored 52 points, the fifth-highest scoring game of his career, to power Phoenix to a victory over the New Orleans.

Kevin Durant scored 20 points and Jusuf Nurkic added 19 for the Suns, who led by as many as 25 points in the third quarter. New Orleans cut the deficit with a 20-8 run to trail 103-90 entering the fourth quarter.

The Suns built a wall around Zion Williamson on defense, and the Pelicans' leading scorer didn't take his first shot until late in the first quarter. Williamson finished with 30 points and five assists. Trey Murphy III added 21 points for New Orleans.

Michael Porter Jr. says his brother would never risk his love for hoops by associating with gambling

DENVER (AP)—Denver Nuggets forward Michael Porter Jr. said Wednesday night that he's sure his younger brother would never do anything to jeopardize his budding NBA playing career.

The league announced Monday it has opened an investigation into Toronto two-way player Jontay Porter amid gambling allegations. ESPN first reported the probe, which it said surrounded Porter's performance in games Jan. 26 and March 20. In both games, Porter played briefly before leaving citing injury or illness. In both of those games, Porter did not come close to hitting the prop-wager lines for points, rebounds and 3-pointers that bettors could play.

Michael Porter Jr. took the podium following the Nuggets' loss to the Suns Wednesday night and was asked about the probe involving his brother.

Michael Porter Jr. said he has no more details than the media does but he vouched for his brother, who at 24 is a year younger than him, saying "Jontay loves the game of basketball" and has been thrilled to play for Toronto this season.

"I've known my brother my

whole life. I know what type of dude he is and I know he's excited to play basketball and I highly doubt he would do anything to put that in jeopardy," Michael Porter Jr. insisted.

Jontay Porter hasn't publicly addressed the situation and he has missed the last couple of the Raptors' games with the team citing personal reasons.

The younger Porter is averaging 4.4 points, 3.2 rebounds and 2.3 assists in 26 games, including five starts. The 6-foot-10 Porter also played in 11 games for Memphis in the 2020-21 season.

The NBA has had business relationships with gaming companies for years, and lists FanDuel Sportsbook and DraftKings as official gaming partners. The league also has relationships with at least 24 other gaming operators.

Last week, Cleveland Cavaliers coach J.B. Bickerstaff revealed he received threats from gamblers last season and reported it to the NBA. Bickerstaff was asked the question after All-Star guard Tyrese Haliburton of the Indiana Pacers indicated days earlier that he's grown tired of regularly hearing criticism from people on social

media about their prop bets.

Michael Porter Jr. offered a similar appraisal Wednesday night, saying he and others regularly hear how their on-court performance affects bettors.

"Yeah, especially the last few years you hear people in the crowd saying what they need you to score tonight or what they don't want you to score," Michael Porter Jr. said. "Every night you're disappointing someone. You're disappointing people if you score too much because they may have bet on the under, and you're disappointing people if you didn't score enough."

"So, it's a part of the game now. I think that it's obviously a dangerous habit. It's a dangerous vice for people," Michael Porter Jr. added. "You know, the love of money is the root of all evil. So, I think that even though it is a thing, we as players just have to accept that. We get paid a lot of money to play this game and I know these people, these fans, they want to make some money, as well. ..."

"It's definitely something that has kind of taken over the sporting world—I don't know if it's a good thing or a bad thing."

76ers' Nurse, Oubre fined \$50K for confronting officials after their narrow loss to LA Clippers

NEW YORK (AP)—Philadelphia 76ers coach Nick Nurse and guard Kelly Oubre Jr. have each been fined \$50,000 for their actions toward officials at the end of their 108-107 loss to the Los Angeles Clippers on Wednesday.

The league announced Friday that Nurse was fined for aggressively pursuing and verbally abusing game officials. Oubre's fine was for verbally abusing and directing an obscene gesture toward game officials.

The game ended when Los Angeles' Kawhi Leonard blocked an Oubre attempt at the rim.

Nurse believed Oubre was fouled by Los Angeles' Paul George while driving to the basket. Nurse went onto the court to argue and had to be restrained by assistants. Oubre pointed at each official before getting pulled away.

Referee Kevin Scott acknowledged in a pool report after the game that George should have been called for a foul on the play. If a foul had been called, Oubre would have gone to the free-throw line with a chance to tie or win the game.

"In real time the crew interpreted that play as the defender jumping vertically," Scott said

in a pool report. "However, in post-game video review we did observe some slight drift to his left by the defender George, and a foul should have been ruled."

Oubre later apologized for confronting the officials.

"In the heat of the moment in an intense basketball game of course and we're not perfect. The refs are not perfect," Oubre said at the time. "I want to apologize for losing my cool, because that's something I work on each and every day and trying to represent God in the best way that I can. And that wasn't it."

Blanco throws a no-hitter in Houston's rout of Toronto



HOUSTON
(AP)—Ronel Blanco of the

Houston Astros threw the first no-hitter in the major leagues this season, blanking the Toronto Blue Jays 10-0 on Monday night.

The right-hander struck out seven and walked two. He walked George Springer to start the game and again with two outs in the ninth. When Vladimir Guerrero Jr. grounded out to end it, Blanco smiled broadly before raising his arms above his head just before being mobbed by teammates.

It was the 17th no-hitter in Astros history and the first in the majors since Philadelphia's Michael Lorenzen threw one against the Washington Nationals on Aug. 9 of last year.

CUBS 5, ROCKIES 0

CHICAGO (AP)—Shota Imanaga pitched six sparkling innings in his major league debut, and the Chicago Cubs used another defensive mistake by Nolan Jones to beat Colorado.

Working in short sleeves on a cold, gray afternoon, Imanaga struck out nine in Chicago's home opener. The Japanese left-hander, who signed a \$53 million, four-year contract with the Cubs in January, allowed two singles and walked none.

Dakota Hudson also was impressive in his first start for Colorado, but a pair of errors on Jones on one play in the sixth sent the right-hander to the loss.

With one out and runners on first and second in a scoreless game, Christopher Morel lined a single into left field. The ball went under the glove of a charging Jones and rolled all the way to the wall.

Ian Happ and Seiya Suzuki raced home as the Wrigley Field crowd of 40,072 roared its approval. Jones' throw from the warning track got away from second baseman Brendan Rodgers in the outfield grass, and Morel scored on a head-first slide.

ATLANTA 9, CHICAGO WHITE SOX 0

CHICAGO (AP)—Austin Riley hit a three-run homer, Charlie Morton threw 5 2/3 scoreless innings and the Braves beat the White Sox in a game shortened to eight innings because of rain.

The 40-year-old Morton (1-0)—the oldest starter in the majors this season—allowed three hits, walked two and struck out six in his season debut to hand Chicago its fourth loss in as many games.

"I felt fine," Morton said after the start of his 17th season. "We used all the tools today and anytime you can do that, it's fun."

Riley's homer, off reliever Dominic Leone, came one pitch after the end of a 44-minute rain delay. He finished the



Houston Astros starting pitcher Ronel Blanco, right, celebrates with catcher Yainer Diaz after throwing a no hitter in a baseball game against the Toronto Blue Jays, Monday, April 1, 2024, in Houston.

day with four RBIs.

"I don't know how the heck he did that," Braves manager Brian Snitker said of Riley's first home run of the season. "That's why these guys knock in a hundred runs; they don't leave many out there."

The game was halted again after the eighth and called 20 minutes later.

PIRATES 8, NATIONALS 4

WASHINGTON (AP)—Pittsburgh improved to 5-0 for the first time since 1983, beating Washington.

Michael A. Taylor, a former member of the Nationals, had three hits, and Bryan Reynolds, Andrew McCutchen, Arika Williams and Henry Davis delivered two apiece. Reynolds stretched his on-base streak to 33 consecutive games dating to last season with a first-inning single and tacked on a two-run double in the ninth.

Pittsburgh led 3-1 entering the seventh, but backup catcher Riley Adams—playing for the first time this season—tied the game for Washington by depositing a four-seam fastball 427 feet off reliever Roansy Contreras for a two-run homer. Contreras (1-0), though, got the win.

That's because his teammates produced a three-run eighth off relievers Robert Garcia (0-1) and Matt Barnes. The big hit was Joe's double to left that scored Taylor, who reached on a bunt. Ke'Bryan Hayes and McCutchen also drove in runs.

Aroldis Chapman got Lane Thomas to pop up for the final

out with two men on, earning his first save of the season.

ORIOLES 6, ROYALS 4

BALTIMORE (AP)—Jordan Westburg hit a tiebreaking, two-run homer in the bottom of the ninth inning to carry Baltimore past the Kansas City.

Westburg's opposite-field drive to right came on an 0-2 pitch from Nick Anderson (0-1) after the Royals rallied to tie the game in the top of the inning.

Ryan Mountcastle homered and drove in three runs for the Orioles.

Bobby Witt Jr. and Salvador Perez homered for the Royals, the second straight game in which each went deep.

RANGERS 9, RAYS 3

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Dane Dunning took a one-hitter into the seventh inning and Josh Jung homered and drove in four runs Monday night to lead the defending World Series champion Texas to a victory over Tampa Bay.

In a rematch of clubs that met during the Rangers' postseason run last fall, Dunning limited the Rays to Jose Siri's third-inning double until Richie Palacios homered with one out in the seventh.

The right-hander didn't retire another batter, departing after sandwiching a pair of walks around Siri's two-run homer that trimmed Tampa Bay's deficit to 6-3.

REDS 6, PHILLIES 3, 10 INNINGS

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—

Spencer Steer hit a grand slam in the 10th inning to lift Cincinnati to a victory over Philadelphia.

Steer clubbed a 2-1, 91 mph fastball off Connor Brogdon (0-1).

Bryce Harper was hitless again in his return to Philadelphia's lineup after an off day. He was in his usual spot, batting third and playing first base. He went 0 for 5 with two strikeouts, falling to 0 for 11 with five strikeouts in three games.

With pinch-runner Bubba Thompson starting the 10th on second base, Brogdon walked Will Benson and Jonathan India. He started Steer with two balls before a called strike made the count 2-1. Steer lined the next pitch over the wall in left-center field.

TIGERS 5, METS 0, 10 INNINGS

NEW YORK (AP)—Carson Kelly hit a three-run homer to cap a five-run 10th inning, and Detroit extended their best start in almost a decade with a 5-0 victory over the New York Mets, who fell to 0-4 for the first time since 2005.

The teams combined to get just two runners—one apiece—into scoring position in the first nine innings before the Tigers broke the tie in the 10th.

Spencer Torkelson and Parker Meadows scored on a grounder by Colt Keith and a sacrifice fly by Javier Báez, respectively, before Kelly homered to left against Michael Tonkin (0-1).

Jason Foley (1-0) struck out two in the ninth before Shelby Miller tossed a perfect 10th

for the Tigers, who are 4-0 for the first time since going 6-0 in 2015.

RED SOX 9, ATHLETICS 0

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—Tanner Houck struck out 10 batters in six scoreless innings and Boston capitalized on five early errors by Oakland.

Jarren Duran had three hits and three steals in the first three innings, Trevor Story added a two-run double and Cedanne Rafaela hit two sacrifice flies to help Boston score eight runs in the first three innings against the mistake-prone A's.

Houck (1-0) did the rest with the latest strong start for Boston, allowing three hits and no walks.

Chase Anderson finished the four-hitter for his first save.

Joe Boyle (0-1) allowed eight runs—seven earned—and eight hits in 2 2-3 innings in his first start of the season to take the loss for Oakland.

MARINERS 5, GUARDIANS 4

SEATTLE (AP)—Dominic Canzone hit a three-run homer and Julio Rodríguez thrilled the crowd with a pair of high-light-reel catches as Seattle beat Cleveland.

Canzone's big fly came in the bottom of the second inning against Guardians starter Triston McKenzie (0-1). Ty France put the Mariners on the board earlier in the inning with an RBI single, and Canzone made it 4-0 with a 411-foot home run to center field, his

first of the season.

Cleveland answered with two runs in the top of the third, as Ramón Laureano was hit by a pitch and Bo Naylor and Brayan Rocchio singled to load the bases. Laureano then scored on a groundout from Steven Kwan, while Naylor scored on a Andrés Giménez sacrifice fly to make it 4-2.

Cleveland's Tyler Freeman chased Mariners starter Emerson Hancock from the game with a solo homer in the top of the sixth. Hancock (1-0) pitched 5 1/3 innings, allowing four hits and three earned runs for his first MLB win.

CARDINALS 6, PADRES 2

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Willson Contreras and Brendan Donovan each hit a two-run home run, Kyle Gibson was dominant and St. Louis beat San Diego.

Gibson (1-0), a 36-year-old right-hander who's with his fifth big league team, allowed home runs to rookie Jackson Merrill and Fernando Tatis Jr., but otherwise dominated. He allowed two runs and four hits in seven innings while striking out four and walking two.

The Cardinals didn't go easy on their former skipper and knuckleballer Matt Waldron, taking a 3-0 lead after just five batters. Donovan hit a leadoff single and scored on Nolan Arenado's two-out RBI double. Contreras then homered to center field, his first.

YANKEES 5, DIAMONDBACKS 2

PHOENIX (AP)—Luis Gil had a successful outing in his return from Tommy John surgery and the New York Yankees started the season on a five-game winning streak for the first time in 32 years, beating the Arizona.

Anthony Volpe had his first career four-hit game—including two doubles—and an RBI.

Gil made his first MLB appearance since May 12, 2022, firing an impressive fastball that touched 100 miles per hour.

Arizona's Ketel Marte had one of the team's four hits and two RBIs, both on sacrifice flies.

DODGERS 8, GIANTS 3

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Freddie Freeman had three hits, Teoscar Hernández homered for the second straight game and the Los Angeles Dodgers beat San Francisco.

James Paxton (1-0) threw five scoreless innings in his debut for the Dodgers, who have won four of their last five.

San Francisco's Michael Conforto had a solo shot down the right-field line in the sixth. Keaton Winn (0-1) allowed three runs and struck out six in five innings.

UConn, Purdue, Alabama, NC State ride transfer portal additions straight into Final Four

By AARON BEARD
AP BASKETBALL WRITER



Connecticut and Purdue needed the right fit. Alabama needed more bodies.

North Carolina State had big holes to fill in the backcourt.

They all mined the transfer portal effectively enough that those pieces are key reasons that they've reached the Final Four, headed to the desert with a chance to hoist a trophy. It's a reminder that finding experienced help has become an essential piece of building a top team in today's game—each added at least one player in his fifth college season—and meshing new pieces into different personalities is a high-reward part of the equation.

"Getting players with a lot of life to them," UConn coach Dan Hurley said before the reigning champs beat Illinois in the Elite Eight. "Avoiding zombies and dead-heads on your roster. Outgoing, different types of personality. It helps you in these bigger moments."

"I think that's something that we spend a lot of time thinking about with a couple of the years where we didn't play our best in March. Get guys that are alive, that aren't going to shrink when



North Carolina State's Michael O'Connell (12) reacts after a basket by DJ Burns Jr. (30) against Duke during the second half of an Elite Eight college basketball game in the NCAA Tournament in Dallas, Sunday, March 31, 2024.

the lights get bright in March."

The Huskies have one in 6-foot-4 guard Cam Spencer.

Spencer—who had played three seasons at Loyola Maryland and last year at Rutgers—found a home in the starting lineup alongside Associated Press first-team All-American Tristen Newton and returning big man Donovan Clingan for a roster that lost some major pieces from last year's title run.

Spencer is the team's No. 2

scorer (14.4 per game) while shooting 44% from 3-point range and 92% from the foul line. He will celebrate his 24th birthday Saturday, the same day the Huskies face the Crimson Tide in the national semifinals.

"He's super easy and super fun to play with on offense," UConn teammate Alex Karaban said.

Alabama coach Nate Oats brought in four transfers after losing four starters, including

No. 2 overall NBA draft pick Brandon Miller. One of those, lanky 6-11 forward Grant Nelson from North Dakota State, played a huge role in getting the program to its first Final Four, going for 24 points and 12 rebounds in the Sweet 16 win against No. 1 region seed North Carolina.

Another is 6-3 guard Aaron Estrada, a 6-3 guard who arrived as a two-time Coastal Athletic Association player of the year

at Hofstra. Alabama is his fourth school in a five-year career, and he's an every-game starter as the team's No. 2 scorer (13.4).

"I think I adjusted pretty well," Estrada said. "I just want to win. So whatever the team needed me to do, whether to score that night, rebound, get assists, play defense, I'm going to do it. I think coming to Alabama was an easy adjustment for me."

At Purdue, the Boilermakers found veteran help by adding a 1,500-point scorer in Lance Jones, a 6-1 guard with 113 starts in four seasons at Southern Illinois. And while 7-foot-4 Zach Edey was the star (40 points, 16 rebounds), Jones came through with one of the biggest shots of the Elite Eight matchup against Tennessee, rattling home a 3-pointer from the right wing with 2:42 left to give Purdue a 66-60 lead.

It took some nerve, too, considering Purdue was just 2 of 13 shots from beyond the arc to that point.

"Coach (Matt Painter) tells us: just be ready to shoot the ball when it comes your way and you're wide open," Jones said. "I put a lot of work in my shot, and I have a lot of confidence in that. And my teammates have a lot of confidence in me."

It is the second consecu-

tive year that N.C. State has bolstered its roster through the portal—though this time to improbable heights.

Fifth-year guard DJ Horne spent two years at both Illinois State and Arizona State, and he's the team's top scorer (16.8) after the departures of last year's Jarkel Joiner-Terquavion Smith backcourt tandem. Stanford transfer Michael O'Connell has been vital at the point both as a steady playmaker with only 17 turnovers in the current nine-game winning streak, as well as a shot maker going back to his banked-in 3 to force overtime against Virginia and extend N.C. State's unexpected Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament title run.

Throw in last year's portal addition of big man DJ Burns Jr.—who has made himself the face of this year's NCAA Tournament with his nimble post moves and big personality—and the Wolfpack's run is comparable to that last Final Four trip in 1983 under the late Jim Valvano.

"I'm glad he's here," Wolfpack coach Kevin Keatts said of Burns. "I'm glad he's on my team. I don't know how you guard him. I'm excited, and I hope nobody figures that out."

SILDREY

From page 16

39:14; and third was Savannah Flores with a time of 41:18.

The 12th grade male division was dominated by Mokyang Kim at 27:49; second was Isiah Hossain at 29:01 and James Venus was third with 33:50.

Jillian Christi Ferrer was first in the 12th grade female division with a time of 45:02; second was Camille Bischoff at 45:36; and third was Jane Mozunder at 47:45.

Veloria, an MHS alumna, said the race was great. He was actually planning not to run it but said that it's good practice for future races. He had wished they had events like this during his time in high school, but he was there during the pandemic.

As for Miller, she said the



CHRYSTAL MARINO

With close to 200 runners showing up early last Saturday morning, the student-led Dolphin 5.5K Color Run, held in honor of Marianas High School's 55th anniversary, was a great success. Photos show participants take a photo soon after the race at Garapan Fishing Base.

weather was just right, unlike during the Women's 10K race held the Saturday before when it was so windy. She joined this race with her son, student-ath-

lete Michael Miller, a freshman at MHS, and said that she's always happy to join races with him. She added that she felt "really good running in the

morning with students."

The event was hosted by the MHS Run Club, the MHS National Honor Society, and Run Saipan.



CHRYSTAL MARINO

Top finishers in the Dolphin 5.5K Color Run female open division, from left, bronze medalist Abbie Kim, gold medalist Akiko Miller, and silver medalist Gabrielle Race pose for a photo last Saturday at the Garapan Fishing Base.



CHRYSTAL MARINO

Marianas High School teacher Kadi Camacho with a bronze medal and MHS vice principal Romolo Orsini with silver, hold the gold medal for gold medalist Chad Tafflinger as the trio were the Top 3 finishers in the staff division for the Dolphin 5.5k Color Run last Saturday at the Garapan Fishing Base.

KANOA

From page 16

had other plans and overtook the lead, 2-1.

The gap widened even more as Kanoa's Markus Toves found the back of the net just two minutes later to make it 3-1. However, Paire still had some fight in them and scored their second goal in the 57th minute.

Kanoa couldn't stop their momentum though and attacked the net once more for a 4-2 lead by the 65th minute. When they thought it would end there, Paire's Javin Bisek kicked one more last-ditch goal in the 87th. But it was all for naught as Kanoa's one goal lead held on as time ran out.

Tinekcha-Awaal (Premier Division)

Kanoa blanked the Women's Development Team, 5-0, for their fourth win.

Kanoa had command of the ball and the pitch throughout the game and took advantage of their chemistry. Just 10 minutes in, Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez found the back of the net for an early 1-0 lead.

Five minutes later, Audrey Castro fired a shot that made it 2-0. The Women's Development Team scavenged for opportunities but they were scarce, although they managed to hold back Kanoa until the 27th minute when Jenna Rose Tenorio scored their third goal.

Chavez and Tenorio would go on to score the fourth and fifth goal to make it 5-0 by the end of the 35th minute, with still no sign of scoring by the Women's Development Team. In the end, Kanoa would put up four more goals via the skunk rule and the Women's Development Team conceded.

In the other game that day, Shirley's defeated MP United, 5-1, for their third win.

LADY

From page 16

it was over but Lady Sufa's Evita Maratita scored one more run in the last inning to scoot closer, 4-6. However, that was all they could muster and BDE held on to win by two runs.

This Sunday, April 7, is the start of the playoffs with Bat & Boujee facing off against Boleras, followed

by BDE vs. Lady Sufa.

On April 14, 670 Magas Babes will go against the winner of BDE vs Lady Sufa; Lady Blue Jays will challenge the winner of Bat & Boujee vs. Boleras. Games are followed by a women's division home run derby.

April 21 is Game 1 of the championship series, followed by game two on April 28, then Game 3 on the same day if necessary.



Tatum, Hauser
each score 25
as Celtics beat
Hornets for 11th
win in 13 games.

PAGE 13

Saipan Tribune Sports

UConn, Purdue,
Alabama, NC State
ride transfer portal
additions straight
into Final Four.

PAGE 15



16 WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 2024

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Sildrey, Akiko top Dolphin 5.5K Run

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sildrey Veloria and Akiko Miller topped Marianas High School's Dolphin 5.5K Color Run last Saturday.



The course started and finished at the Garapan Fishing Base with over 100 runners. The run was in celebration of MHS' 55th anniversary.

Veloria finished first overall with a time of 21:16, followed by Jireh Wang at 21:24, and Michael Miller at 21:51.

In the women's open division, Miller topped it with a time of 23:48. Second was Gabrielle Race at 31:02, and third was Abbie Kim at 31:15.

There was also an MHS staff division, with MHS teacher Chad Taflinger coming in first at 23:41. Romolo Orsini, MHS' vice principal, was second at 44:45, and third was MHS teacher, Kadi Camacho, at



Dolphin 5.5K Color Run top male finishers in the open division last Saturday at the Garapan Fishing Base pose with their medals. Marianas High School Run Club president Pony Tang, far left, poses with, from left, bronze medalist Michael Miller, gold medalist Sildrey Veloria, and silver medalist Jireh Wang.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Kanoa Football Clubs notch wins in MSL, Premier League

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Kanoa Football Club notched wins in their respective divisions of the Marianas Soccer League 1 and the Tinekcha-Awaal (Premier Division) Spring 2024 Dove Women's League last March 24 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

In MSL 1, Kanoa slipped past Paire FC, 4-3.

Paire drew first blood in the 12th minute after a lot of back-and-forth action to gain the early 1-0 lead. They trumped Kanoa throughout the first half, but Paire also couldn't follow up with their first goal.

Kanoa finally found a break in the net in the 42nd minute made by Paul Lizama to tie the game up, 1-1. Paire tried their best to defend and nip another goal to take the lead back, but Kanoa's Tyler Omelau

See KANOA on Page 15



NMIFA

File photo shows Kanoa Football Club's Paul Lizama, right, in the Marianas Soccer League 1 going up against a Paire FC player during a game at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

54:50. Race was the only woman in the MHS women's staff division.

Along with the staff division, there was a student division by grade level.

In the 9th grade male division, Dwayne Tabhan came in first with a time of 29:02; a close second was Tristan Que at 29:03; and third was Rooney Gil at 30:44.

In the 9th grade female division, Catherine Pan was first at 31:24;

second was Jian Chun with a time of 33:12; and third was Yuxi Zhang who clocked in at 33:24.

The 10th grade male division first place was Takeru Jim at 22:16; second was Mark Costales with 27:52; and third was Jie Jimmy Huang at 32:19.

Maria Batallones was first in the 10th grade female division with her time of 35:40, followed

by Hilah Bacani at 36:12, and Jacqueline Torres at 41:41.

Zhi Xiang Lin topped the 11th grade male division with a time of 23:18; second was Jeremiah Maximo at 26:03; and third was Angelo Lobo at 35:29.

In the 11th grade female division, Rizza Relucio finished first at 33:12; second was Rosa Dela Cruz with

See SILDREY on Page 15

Lady Blue Jays lead BASA heading into playoffs

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The high-soaring Lady Blue Jays lead the 2024 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association women's division after their eight win last March 24 at the Dandan Softball Field.

The Lady Blue Jays' record is now at 8-2 after a close 3-2 win over the Bolas.

Kianu Aldan scored the much needed third run in the third inning despite a scoreless game for the Bolas so far. Allanah Sablan and Keolani Rios scored the first two runs in the second inning, but the rest of the squad couldn't make it around the bases later in the game.

The Bolas' Keona Rogopes and Tori Pangelinan found their way home in the last inning to make it a close 2-3, but the Lady Blue Jays' pitcher Angel Deleon Guerrero put a stop to their rally and secured the W after three much needed outs to end the game.

In other games that day, the 670 Magas Babes clinched their sixth win as they edged Bat & Boujee, 7-2.

Bat & Boujee's Rosie Saralu and Lana Santos were the only two runs in the first and third, while the Babes went wild in the sixth with four runs after having already scored three in the third for a 7-2 lead.

The Babes pitcher Louisa Moolang went on to shut down Bat & Boujee in four consecutive scoreless innings.

BDE then defeated Lady Sufa, 6-4.

BDE's Oly Fritz and Becky Repeki scored the much needed two runs in the sixth inning to put them up, 6-3. They thought

See LADY on Page 15



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

File photo shows the Lady Blue Jays team posing for a photo during the opening day of the 2024 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association at the Dandan Softball Field.